

*A & J. 1711. The Widow*  
THE  
Amorous Widow :

OR, THE  
WANTON WIFE.

A  
COMEDY.

As it is Acted at the  
THEATRE-ROYAL,  
IN  
DRURY-LANE,

By His MAJESTY'S Servants.

---

By Mr. BETTERTON.

---

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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L O N D O N :

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THE

Widow's

THE

Widow's

COMEDY



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# PROLOGUE.

Written by CHARLES WILSON *Esq*;

**F**rom the French Stage \* to-day we entertain,  
 And shew, alternate, Wives and Husbands' Pain;  
 The Sport of Love is a bewitching Evil,  
 But Jealousy is a tormenting Devil:  
 Marry'd or Single 'tis to Him the same,  
 The Fire he kindles, and then fans the Flame;  
 May this fair Circle † shun the fatal Snare,  
 And make their Spouses their peculiar Care;  
 By their own Choice be to the Temple led,  
 And not to wrinkled-Cits be forc'd to wed;  
 Whenever Parents such a Task impose,  
 Husband and Wife are made eternal Foes.  
 In various Shapes the monstrous Fiend is painted,  
 And ev'ry Jealous Cuckold too is sainted.  
 Fops, Fools, and Fiddlers shall adorn our Scene,  
 And a brisk Widow cure ye of the Spleen.

The Bard to whom we owe this merry Feast,  
 Is now, we doubt not, number'd with the Best;  
 Our English ROSCIUS, you All know the Name,  
 ROSCIUS and BETTERTON we count the same.  
 "What he has been, tho' present Praise be dumb,  
 "Shall haply be a Theme in Times to come,  
 "As now we talk of Roscius and of Rome. ||

\* This Comedy is an improved Translation of the  
 GEORGE DANDIN of Moliere.

† Pointing to the Boxes.

|| See Mr. Rowe's Epilogue, for Mr. Betterton's Benefit,  
 Spoken by Mrs. Barry, 1709.



# EPILOGUE.

Written by ARTHUR MANWAYRING *Esq;*

**T**O all who grace this Theatre to-day;  
 My Thanks with humble Gratitude I pay.  
 May all the Fair, in Life, successful prove;  
 And all the Men, obtain what most they love.  
 But chiefly Those, on whose important Care,  
 Depends the future Progress of the War:  
 May all such Men have this propitious Doom,  
 Conquest Abroad, and just Returns at Home.

Now to my Spouse: (*I must constrain my Nature,  
 And try henceforward to endure the Creature.*)  
 Come here, thou solid Comfort of my Life,  
 Forgive the Faults of thy repenting Wife;  
 Consider, mine I did but just begin,  
 I ran the Danger, but escap'd the Sin;  
 And since the Matter is so justly ended,  
 My Ways, hereafter, shall be strangely mended.  
 Sure I was mad, with a kind Spouse like This,  
 To think of wronging such a Lovely-Piece:

Be-

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Behold his Eyes so bright, his Skin so sleek,  
His winning-Leer, and Dimple in his Cheek;  
Well! 'tis resolv'd, I'll strive with *Hymen's*-Grace,  
To doat upon this Venerable Face.  
But if so blest an Union cannot be,  
*I'm* sure in one thing we may both agree;  
A Thing too common in a Marry'd-State,  
Which is, each other heartily to Hate.



## **Dramatis Personæ.**

### **M E N.**

*Sir* Peter Pride,  
Lovemore.  
Cunningham.  
Barnaby Brittle,  
Merryman.  
Jeffery.  
Clodpole,  
Jeremy.

Mr. *Johnson*.  
Mr. *Wilks*.  
Mr. *Mills*.  
Mr. *Norris*.  
Mr. *Harper*.  
Mr. *Oates*.  
Mr. *Miller*.  
Mr. *Ray*.

### **W O M E N.**

*Lady* Laycock.  
*Lady* Pride.  
*Philadelphia*.  
*Mrs.* Brittle.  
*Prudence*.  
*Damaris*.

*Mrs.* *Moor*.  
*Mrs.* *Willis*.  
*Mrs.* *Cibber*.  
*Mrs.* *Oldfield*.  
*Mrs.* *Butler*.  
*Mrs.* *Mills*.

Musicians, Servants, and Dancers,

Scene **L O N D O N.**





THE  
**Amorous Widow:**  
 OR, THE  
**WANTON WIFE.**

ACT I.

*Enter Philadelphia and Jeffery.*

*Phil.* **L** Should believe Mr. *Cunningham* very constant, if I had Faith enough to credit this Letter, *Jeffery*—What complements are here? but 'tis the Style that all young Lovers write in.

*Jef.* Pray, Madam, believe me, you know I am a Man of Integrity. I cannot dissemble—let him write what he would—if he did not love you, do you think I'd tell you so?

B

*Phil.*

2 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Phil.* When he has Opportunity, I confess, he says kind Things to me.

*Jeff.* Take my Word, Madam, my Master is not like other Men; unless he loves a Lady, and loves her passionately too, he never troubles himself to complement her much.

*Phil.* Never! Yes, *Jeffery*, sometimes you know he complements my Aunt.

*Jeff.* That's a convincing Proof of his Love to you—you can't think him reduc'd to the necessity of making Love to an antiquated Piece without design: you know he has no other Way to obtain the Happiness of seeing you. What shall I tell him, Madam?

*Phil.* Tell him, I have received, and read his Letter.

*Jeff.* Is that all, Madam?

*Phil.* All! yes; art thou not content with that?

*Jeff.* Any indifferent Person, that had hands, and cou'd have read, would have done as much as that.

*Phil.* Well: tell him then, in time perhaps, I may—

*Jeff.* My Master, Madam, can't endure to depend on a Perhaps.

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* Quick, quick, up to your Chamber, Madam.

*Phil.* What's the matter? Is my Aunt coming hither?

*Pru.* She's at my Heels; go up the back Stairs, quickly.

*Phil.* Farewell, *Jeffery*, commend me to your Master.

[*Exit.*

*Jeff.* For what, I beseech you—is not my Master bewitch'd to court a Lady a whole Year; and she'll hardly say she loves him yet?

*Pru.* Alas! she's but a Novice; let me alone with her. I'll order the business so, that if thy Master be discreet, and passionate enough in his Expressions, he wins her Heart, I warrant you.

*Jeff.* He can say nothing to her, but that damn'd Aunt of hers is hearkning still—what pleasure can she find in Love at Fifty?

*Pru.* Fye, *Jeffery*, you must say at Five and Twen-  
ty.

*Jeff.*

*Jeff.* I wonder any Woman can have the impudence, to live, and trouble Mankind after that Age——

*Pru.* There never was a Woman so old, but she retain'd a good Opinion of herself.

*Jeff.* Then she dresses herself so fantastically too, that all may see she strives to appear Young in defiance of Nature—she is more gawdy in that she calls Half-Mourning, than a young Bride is on her Wedding Day.

*Pru.* That makes her appear more charming to her Servants.

*Jeff.* The Devil's in her, if she believes that any man can love her, 'tis jeering her but to be civil to her.

*Pru.* A little Flattery fires her——she believes all that is said to her, and he that does not complement, and make Love to her, shall not be twice admitted to her House.

*Jeff.* Oh Reverend Beauty! On my Conscience, if I cou'd grease her Chops with a few Complements, she'd mump and smile upon me.

*Pru.* No doubt of it.

*Jeff.* Well, when shall my Master have an Opportunity to speak freely to Mrs. *Philadelphia*?

*Pru.* Mr. *Lovemore* is thy Master's Friend, and is better belov'd here than he imagines; you must persuade him to amuse the Aunt, that Mr. *Cunningham* may have Convenience to court the Niece.

*Jeff.* Mr. *Lovemore*'s tired with playing that Part so often, he's cloy'd with the Aunt, and swears he'll have no more of her.

*Pru.* I am sure, her Niece and I endure much more——tell him, 'twill be Charity in him to relieve us, *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* 'Twill be very hard to persuade him to't.

*Pru.* This Old Lady of mine, has languish'd for a Young Husband ever since Sir *Oliver Laycock* dy'd; she cares not what Estate he has, or what Religion he is of, so he be young and lusty: But where is the great Viscount *Sans-Terre* thy Master told her of, methinks he's long a-coming?

*Jeff.* Some cross unlucky Accident hinders him.

#### 4 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Pru.* She has lately received some Letters, that have giv'n a full Account of him.

*Jeff.* So much the worse; what is it?

*Pru.* They say his Fortune is not very much, but he is greatly born, and very pleasant—he is so great a Lover of Musick, that he has not a Servant, but can sing or dance, or play upon some Instrument; you may know when he's come, by the noise the Fiddles make in welcoming him to Town, for all from *Westminster* to *Wapping* pay him Homage.

*Jeff.* Wou'd he were but marry'd to her, *Prudence.*

*Pru.* Whether he marries her or no, is not our Business, *Jeffery*; let him but fool with her till thy Master has gain'd her Niece, and then our Work is done.

*Jeff.* We have had enough of thy old Lady *Laycock*, let us now talk of our own Amour—speak, dost thou love me, *Prudence*?

*Pru.* A pleasant Question—do you doubt it now?

*Jeff.* If you would have me credit you, you must swear it.

*Pru.* Sure you are jealous, *Jeffery.*

*Jeff.* I know your Humour well enough; you love a bold audacious Fellow, that will say any thing, and such a one we have newly come to Town, one *Merryman*, our Falconer; I fear you'll like him better than you do me.

*Pru.* Oh Fool! why should you think so?

*Jeff.* I have some Honour in me, but he is a Fellow that has eaten Shame and drank after it—he is more Impudent, if possible, than a Court-Page, and will take no denial.

*Pru.* Hold your tongue—here's my Lady.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*L. Lay.* What Business has *Jeffery* with you?

*Pru.* His Master sent him to enquire whether he might have leave to wait on you this Morning.

*L. Lay.* Yes, tell him I expect him.

*Jeff.* He durst not come because Mr. *Lovemore's* with him.

*L. Lay.*



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L. Lay. Go, tell 'em if they please to come, they shall be welcome both. [Exit Jeffery.

Prue. You see, Madam, what Power your Beauty has, neither of 'em can live a moment without seeing you.

L. Lay. No, they have other business with me, Prue; they came from *Paris* lately, and brought a Letter to me from my Brother, and I believe they come for my Answer now.

Prue. But does not one of 'em love you, Madam?

L. Lay. I have some reason to believe one of them does—Mr. *Lovemore* has spar'd no pains to persuade me to quit my Widow-hood—'Tis a very malicious World we live in, Prue, they are so apt to censure, and speak ill of any single Woman, that we ought to marry only to avoid that Scandal—Thou knowest, Prue, Wealth is not the Thing I seek.

Prue. Then, Madam, your Business is done—the Viscount *Sans-Terre* shall be your Husband.

L. Lay. Ah Prue, if he were but as handsome as—

Prue. Ah Madam, that's too much.

L. Lay. Why, may not I wish for 'em?

Prue. Consider his Quality, Madam, and bate him something for that—one thing I must advise you, be not too prodigal of your Gold at first—to be Liberal now and then will be convenient; and make him kinder to you.

L. Lay. For all this, I should think myself very happy, if I were certain of Mr. *Cunningham*, or Mr. *Lovemore*.

Prue. A little Jealousy will enflame 'em; they'll be more pressing when the Viscount comes.

L. Lay. But yet methinks *Cunningham* and my Niece—

Prue. What, Madam?

L. Lay. Are always whispering—

Prue. He only complements her, Madam; she is too young, to make Love seriously.

L. Lay. With your favour, there's no trusting to that—to my knowledge there are those younger than she, that understand what Love is but too well.—

## 6 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Prue.* That's true, Madam, but *Philadelphia* is so innocent, that no Man can make Love to her, but to divert himself——here she is, Madam.

*L. Lay.* What does she come for? I'll send her packing quickly.

*Prue.* Consider what you do, Madam; how can Mr. *Lovemore* entertain your Ladyship, unless his Friend may divert himself with Rallying with your Niece?

*L. Lay.* For all that, I could wish——

*Prue.* Pray trouble not yourself, trust me, I'll watch her, Madam.

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Phil.* Will your Ladyship go to *Eaton's*——the Coach is at the Door.

*L. Lay.* No, I'll not go yet.

*Phil.* If you stay long, Madam, the best Goods may be sold before you come.

*L. Lay.* No matter——ha! what ails the Girl?——how strangely she looks!——her Eyes are hardly open yet.

*Phil.* How, Madam!

*L. Lay.* Then her Head's drest awry——how it disguises her——Lord, how frightfully it looks!——

*Phil.* Truly, Aunt, 'tis drest just as the Fashion is.

*L. Lay.* Fetch her Hood, *Prue*, I'll have her put it on till it be mended.

*Phil.* I drest it to please no body but myself, Madam.

*L. Lay.* I'll have you now dress yourself to please me——come, put on your Hood.

*Prue.* My Lady's in the right——never was any thing more Ridiculous——here put on your Hood, I am sure it's much handsomer.

*L. Lay.* Why don't you put it on?

*Phil.* I can't endure it, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Do it, I say.

*Prue.* So, now 'tis as it should be——all modest Maids shou'd be drest thus——but here's Mr. *Cunningham*, and Mr. *Lovemore*.

*Enter Lovemore, and Cunningham.*

*Lov.* Your Servant, Madam—you see how we love  
your

*The WANTED WIFE.*

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your Company, by giving you this Trouble in the Morning.

*Cun.* 'Tis a Happiness we are much envy'd for.

*L. Lay.* You are welcome, Gentlemen, pray command this House as freely as your own.

*Lov.* Why does this young Lady hide her Face?—pray Madam, let us see you.

*L. Lay.* Forbear, Sir, I beseech you—she has had the Tooth-ach lately; if she takes off her Hood, she'll catch Cold, and bring the Pain again.

*Phil.* I thank your Ladyship for your Care of me, but the Pain has been gone so long, I do not fear it now.

*Lov.* Nay, then we must have it off.

*Phil.* What say you, Madam, shall I pull it off.

*L. Lay.* Yes, Impertinent, I see you have a mind to shew yourself.

*Pru.* 'Tis the Nature of all young Girls to do what they are forbidden.

*Cun.* I come to trouble your Ladyship for your Letter to my Lawyer—your countenancing my Business, will be a great Advantage to me.

*L. Lay.* This, Sir, is what my Brother commanded me, you shall see 'tis my Delight to serve his Friends.

*Lov.* Madam, you promis'd me that Honourable Title.

*L. Lay.* Do you, Sir, pretend to it?

*Lov.* Yes, Madam, more than any one.

*L. Lay.* I have not much Beauty to boast of; but Virtue, Sir, makes some amends for the defect of the other.

*Lov.* Defect! pray Madam, wrong not yourself so much.

*L. Lay.* There are few but know a little their own Value—and tho' a Woman be not fam'd for a great Beauty, yet if she be agreeable, there are those will like her well enough.

*Lov.* You have that in Perfection, Madam.

*L. Lay.* In this, Sir, I know you do not flatter me—*Phil!*

*Phil.* Madam.

8 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Cun.* Then, Madam, you like my Choice of these Clothes?

*Phil.* Extremely well—was it your own Fancy, Sir?

*Cun.* I am not ashamed to own it, since you like it, Madam.

*Pru.* I listen to 'em—he talks to her of nothing but new Fashions—you may, Madam, continue your Discourse without disturbance.

*L. Lay.* Pray Sir, tell me freely—how old do you think I am?

*Lov.* Faith, Madam, if you were not a Widow, I should think you a very Girl; scarce Twenty.

*L. Lay.* Now, Sir, you flatter me—you might have said Thirty; I do not love to disguise my Age.

*Lov.* How! Thirty, Madam? and look so youthfully—I'll not believe it, 'tis impossible.

*L. Lay.* You do not know what Misery I endure'd, whilst my old Husband liv'd—the Grievs I had upon me would have distracted another Woman——alas, Sir, it is not Age, but Sorrow has broke me.

*Lov.* It makes me sad to hear you tell it, Madam, and vexes me to think any old Man should enjoy such Happiness.

*L. Lay.* You know not, Sir, how many Tears I have shed.

*Lov.* 'Tis some Comfort, Madam, to remember he did not live long with you.

*L. Lay.* Truly, Sir, 15 Years.

*Pru.* Yes, and 15 to that.

[*Aside!*]

*L. Lay.* Having been so unfortunate in a Husband, you may believe I have but little Encouragement to marry again? for I am very happy now I am alone.

*Lov.* You do wisely, Madam, for she deserves not to be pity'd, that rashly runs into the same Misfortunes; and therefore you have, Madam——

*L. Lay.* Nay, Sir, I have not forsworn Marriage yet.

*Lov.* I'm sorry for it, with all my heart!—Pray, Madam, where do you use to walk in the Evenings, into *St. James's Park*?

*L. Lay.* Not very often, Sir.

*Lov.*



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*Lov.* Or into the Mulberry Garden?—Is not the Wilderness very pleasant?

*L. Lay.* If I like my Company, Sir, I never dislike the place.

*Lov.* Let me have the honour, Madam, to wait upon you thither presently.

*L. Lay.* Not yet, Sir, after Dinner if you please—but tell me, Sir, do you think me such an Enemy to Marriage, that were I sure a young Gentleman lov'd me, and lov'd me truly, I would be so cruel to refuse him?

*Lov.* When I consider what you endur'd in Sir *Oliver Laycock's* Time, I think you ought to do it, Madam—and that Man's unjust, Madam, that urges you to break your Resolution.

*L. Lay.* Pray do not mistake me, Sir, I have made no such Resolution yet.

*Lov.* Nay, Madam, since you're displeas'd with what I have said, we'll change the Discourse—Pray, Madam, do you think the young Lord *Lucky* has that Interest in Court that Fame reports he has.

*L. Lay.* Lord, Sir, this is a strange wild Answer to my Question—Let me tell you, Sir, if I have any Merit, Wealth or Beauty, there's one Sir, in the World deserves 'em all.

*Prn.* Good! how she teazes him? [*Aside.*]

*Lov.* But has that one no Fault, Madam?

*L. Lay.* You know him very well, Sir.

*Lov.* I know him, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Yes, you, Sir; 'tis yourself.

*Lov.* 'Sdeath, what will become of me now? [*Aside.*]

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Madam.

*L. Lay.* What now?

*Ser.* The Marchioness is come to visit you.

*L. Lay.* Troublesome Creature! go one of you, and entertain her quickly.

*Prn.* Which of us, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Go you, *Phil*, and keep her Company till I come.

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*Phil,*

10 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Phil.* I shall, Madam. [Exit.]

*Cun.* Pray, Madam, what is this Marchioness?

*L. Lay.* O Sir, a most eternal Talker, her Tongue goes like the Larum of a Clock, as fast, and to the same Tune still—She's almost Sixty, and yet pretends to Beauty, and loves Courtship most unreasonably—Say but a kind thing to her, and you win her very Heart: the truth is, she has not much Reputation, Sir; but the Respect I give her is to her Quality, not to her Person—but she's an Original in her kind, Sir.

*Lov.* Oh blind, blind Creature! she draws her own Picture, and laughs at it.

*Cun.* Sure, Madam, her Conversation must be very pleasant.

*L. Lay.* She has been much courted in her youth; but 'twould make one die with Laughing to hear her boast of her Lovers now—how this Knight sighs, and that Lord dies for her; when all the while I know what Necessities the poor Creature is reduc'd to—I would have brought her hither, but that I knew we never should have been rid of her—Excuse me a Moment, I'll send her away, and return presently—your Servant, Gentlemen. [Exit.]

*Cun.* How now, Friend, what's the matter? why dost look so fullenly?

*Lov.* I play the Ass here any longer? no, if I do, may I turn Jack-Pudding to a Rope-dancer, and shew my Tricks in *Bartholomew Fair* next Year.

*Cun.* Nay, but Friend, dear Friend——

*Lov.* Tell not me of Friendship; what Man would endure to be so plagu'd as I have been? I have parry'd with my best Skill the most dangerous Thrusts that ever yet were made at me—to tug at an Oar, or dig in a Mine at *Peru*, is Recreation to it: but the first time to offer Marriage to me; I sweat to think of it. She made me tremble twice, for fear she should have forc'd my Neck into her mouldy Noose of Matrimony.

*Pru.* We have no other way to blind her, Sir.

*Lov.* 'Tis all one to me.

*Cun.* If thou lov'st my Life, Friend, do not forsake me now.

*Lov.*

## *The WANTON WIFE.* II

*Lov.* Pray Sir, live if you please, and give me leave to do so too—Should I again be left alone with her, the best I can hope for is Distraction.

*Pru.* How do you like the Niece?

*Cun.* She's all Perfection.

*Pru.* How do you thrive? do you find her kind, Mr. *Cunningham*?

*Cun.* She has promis'd me a meeting after Dinner, if thou can'st but remove the Aunt for us.

*Pru.* That must be Mr. *Lovemore's* Work.

*Lov.* My Work!

*Pru.* Yes, yours, perform your Promise, carry her this Afternoon to see Paradise.

*Lov.* I'll sooner carry her to Hell, and leave her there. I do it? no, Good-by.

*Cun.* Stay, stay, dear Friend; can you deny me, when all my Happiness depends upon it?

*Lov.* Were it to storm a Town, to attack an Army, I durst attempt it, Sir—but for this Aunt, I dare not encounter her.

*Pru.* She will not eat you, Sir.

*Lov.* Yes but she will, and forty such as I am for a Breakfast.

*Pru.* This Man is mad—

*Lov.* So would he, or any Man, that had been worry'd by her as I have been—I'll sooner be sent to the Tower, and caged there with the Lions, or be carry'd to the Bankside, and be baited with *Tom Dove*, than be shut an Hour into a Glass Coach with this old Cormorant.

*Pru.* Would this Viscount of yours were come!

*Cun.* He'll not be absent long, the ready Money pleases him extreamly—he shall do whatever I command him.

*Pru.* Wou'd Mr. *Lovemore* were but as tractable—

*Lov.* Well, since I am not, I'll resign my Place to him—Stay, there's an admirable Design come into my Head just now.

*Cun.* What is it, Friend?

*Lov.* Why, may not *Merryman*, your Falconer, pass for this Viscount, Sir? no body knows him.

*Pru.* Has he Wit enough to do it?

*Lov.*

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*Lov.* He has Impudence enough, and that's as good.

*Cun.* 'Twas he that I employ'd to treat with *Sans-Terre*, he knows his Humour to a hair.

*Pru.* Pray send for him immediately.

*Enter Merryman and Jeffery.*

*Cun.* He has prevented us; look here he is!

*Mer.* Your Servant, Sir; your humble Servant, Madam.

*Pru.* Is this your *Merryman*?

*Mer.* Yes Lady, have you any Service for him?

*Cun.* Have you seen the Viscount, *Merryman*?

*Mer.* Yes, Sir, with much ado.

*Cun.* When will he come?

*Mer.* A Week hence, or sooner, if you desire it.

*Cun.* But we want a Viscount presently.

*Mer.* Presently!

*Lov.* Yes presently——could'st thou not act him, *Merryman*.

*Mer.* I act a Viscount, Sir?

*Cun.* Thou knowest him, *Merryman*.

*Mer.* Yes, perfectly Sir, 'tis a gay, jovial Blade.

*Cun.* What say'st thou? wilt thou take this Viscount's Name, and court this lusty Widow.

*Mer.* I am your Man, Sir; I'll act him to the Life, I'll warrant you.

*Pru.* Then without more delay, he must this Afternoon visit my Lady, Sir, for she expects him——whilst he is entertaining her, you may employ that Time to meet your Mistress——but *Jeffery* must be near, to bring you Intelligence.

*Cun.* Do you hear, *Jeffery*?

*Jeff.* Yes, Sir, I shall observe my Orders punctually.

*Cun.* In the mean time we'll go, and dress our Viscount Ridicule——if your Lady inquires after us, pray tell her, *Prudence*——

*Pru.* Good Sir, spare your Advice, 'tis enough I tell her the Viscount will be here this Afternoon——Pray be you careful, Sir, that your Man acts his part.

*Mer.* Good Gentlewoman, meddle you with your own Business——look to your Lady's false Hair, *Spanish* Paper, and Mercury Water; and trouble not your head about my Part.

*Pru.* This Fellow's conceited, Sir.

*Mer.*



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*Mer.* Not so neither; but I'd have you to know, I understand my Trade as well as you do yours.

*Prn.* I have given Advice to as wise a Man as you are.

*Mer.* It may be so—then he had Wit enough not to follow it—let's see your Mouth, how old are you?

*Prn.* Guess.

*Mer.* Fifteen, or thereabouts.

*Prn.* This Man of yours deals with the Devil, Sir; most certainly, else 'twere impossible he should guess so right.

*Cun.* Go, Sirrah, get you about your Business; shou'd you be discovered now, our whole Design is spoil'd!

*Lov. Prudence,* farewell.

*Mer.* Farewel, young tender Virgin, when I am a Viscount, I shall so thrum your Jacket.

*Prn.* Away, you Fool.

*End of the First Act.*



## A C T II.

*Enter Cunningham and Philadelphia.*

*Cun.* **A**T length, Madam, Fortune has been kind to me, we have no jealous Eyes to watch us now; now I may tell you how I have languish'd for you, tho' I hope Madam, I might spare my Language, because my Eyes have often done it for me.

*Phil.* I do not well understand your meaning, Sir; but I am bound in Generosity to wish you Happiness.

*Cun.* That Wish, Madam, was kind—but if it proceeds only from Generosity, 'twill hardly make me hap-

pyt

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py; 'tis something more that I desire of you, 'tis your Love that I implore.

*Phil.* I am afraid to hear this Language, Sir, and blush to find myself alone with you—and shou'd my Aunt see us——

*Cun.* Pray let not that disturb you, Madam; *Prudence* will be careful to prevent that Danger—What have you now to fear?

*Phil.* A thousand things; the Anger of my Friends, the Reproach and Censure of the World, but, above all, a Change in you——that guilty Coldness, which too often your Sex returns our easy, our innocent Affections.

*Cun.* Ah Madam, do not injure me so much, to judge of me by others—rather think me guilty of all you can imagine, than believe I can be false to you.

*Phil.* All Men say the same things, their Actions only discover the Truth of their Intentions.

*Cun.* Then I beseech you, Madam, judge of me by my Actions; let Time convince you, by a thousand Proofs, of the Truth of my Intentions.

*Phil.* Alas how easily we are persuaded to what we are desirous to believe!

*Cun.* But Madam, may I hope to obtain your Love?

*Phil.* The hazard I run in being here alone with you, methinks shou'd satisfy you—but, Sir, you know I am at my Aunt's disposal, my Father dying left me to her Care—and till she is provided with a Husband, 'twill be in vain, I fear, to ask me of her—I hear a Viscount's coming to court her, Sir; if that succeeds—

*Cun.* Then I may live in hope, and not declare my Love, before we see how she receives this Viscount.

*Phil.* I ought to have given you only my Esteem; but if your Love be what you paint it to me, I must in justice then grant your Desire.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*L. Lay.* That Painting, my fine Niece, is very pretty—that Blush becomes you too—I see your queasy Stomach's up already, and I must be forc'd to provide a Gallant for you—very well.

*Phil.* Madam, for me?

*L. Lay.* Yes, Impudence, for you—had I not overheard the Love he made, this Hussy wou'd deny it. *Cun.*

*Cun.* Indeed, Madam——

*L. Lay.* Go, go, you may be asham'd to come into a virtuous Family, to debauch an innocent young Virgin.

*Cun.* Madam, I came with no such base Intent; my End was honourable, 'twas Marriage, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Here's none to be married, Sir, you are mistaken——Come to make Love in a Widow's Family, that's very pleasant truly.

*Phil.* Pray Madam, do not think——

*L. Lay.* Hold your tongue, Bold Face, I shall take another Course with you.

*Phil.* Very well, you must come hither to beg my Assistance, and offend my Aunt——what had I to do with your foolish Love?

*L. Lay.* What does the Baggage mean?

*Phil.* 'Tis not fit for me to tell it, Madam, because I know it will but encrease your Anger——but if ever he asks me to speak for him agen——

*L. Lay.* You speak for him; for what?

*Cun.* 'Sdeath, Madam, what do you intend to do?

*Phil.* I intend to discover all, and clear myself—you see how I am chid for you——I told you before how much my Aunt would be offended, if any one should presume to speak of Love to her; and that she had made a solemn Resolution to live and die a Widow; but you were so importunate, you would not be deny'd.

*L. Lay.* No *Phil*, you are mistaken, I have made no such Resolution yet; but I confess 'tis my Design to do so.

*Cun.* Well Madam, since all Addresses of this kind will but offend your Ladyship, I'll think of it no more.

*L. Lay.* Stay, I beseech you, Sir, be not so hasty——let *Phil* go on—I shall be able to judge when I have heard it.

*Phil.* Well, Madam, if you are resolv'd to hear it——

*Cun.* If you have any kindness for me, Madam, do not engage me in it.

*Phil.* Truly, Madam, I am afraid you will be more displeas'd, when you hear what he has made me promise him.

*Cun.*

16 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Cun.* That's very true, I have offended you enough already; therefore, dear Madam, hear no more.

*L. Lay.* Yes, I will hear it, Sir, and more—I'll know how she came to be alone with you.

*Phil.* Madam, he met me here by chance, and came——

*Cun.* A Curse! say I came to rob the House, to fire the City; tell her any thing; I'll own it, rather than say I love her.

*L. Lay.* What's that he whispers to you?

*Phil.* He says he's ashamed to let you hear it; but I must hide nothing from your Ladyship.

*Cun.* Well, 'tis in vain to struggle; I am caught—

*Phil.* The truth is, he came hither to seek you, Madam—and meeting me, he gave me a Description of I know not what Pain he suffer'd for your Ladyship—and told me, if I took not pity on him, and inform'd you of his Love.—I started at the Word—and was extremely incens'd at him, as you, Madam, instructed me—but still he prest me, Madam—and I protested, as in truth I ought, that I durst not speak to you for him, or any Man—at last he told me, he knew your rigid Temper, and therefore durst not tell you his Love directly, but begg'd that I would, at a distance, break it to you—well knowing, that nothing but Time and infinite Courtship wou'd prevail with one of your Wit and Beauty, Madam—at last, he made such a lamentable Complaint, that I (not thinking any harm) took pity on him, and promis'd, if his Love was as he painted it to me, I must, in Justice, then grant his Desire—and as I spoke these Words you enter'd, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Go, get you to your Chamber.

*Phil.* Your Servant, Sir.

[*Exit.*

*Cun.* I fear I am troublesome, I'll leave you, Madam.

*L. Lay.* No stay, Sir, I beseech you.

*Cun.* I am much ashamed I have displeas'd you, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Indeed, Sir, I had some Reason to be angry.

*Cun.* You had, I must confess—but now I see what



an Aversion you have for Love, I'll trouble you no more.

*L. Lay.* I assure you, Sir, I have been pester'd with so many Suitors, and so much troubled to deny 'em too——

*Cun.* No body can be ignorant of that, 'twas indiscreetly done, I must confess; but 'twas the Extremity of my Passion, Madam, made me commit that Fault.

*L. Lay.* Why did you not address yourself to me?

*Cun.* To you, Madam!——with what Confidence could I presume to do it? But Madam, if you have any Esteem for me, give me leave to make my Passion known to *Philadelphia*.

*L. Lay.* We must not talk of Love before young Girls, they are too apt to think of it themselves, we need not, Sir, put 'em in mind of it—but, on the contrary, we shou'd make Love seem monstrous to 'em, tho' we know better things ourselves—not but that there are Pleasures in Widowhood, which are not to be found in a marry'd Life—but 'tis as we ourselves fancy it.

*Cun.* Well, Madam, since you fancy it so much, I shall not endeavour to dissuade you.

*L. Lay.* Do not mistake me, Sir, I say not this because 'tis my intent to over-value myself at all, but on the contrary——

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Phil.* The Man has brought the little Pictures, Madam.

*Cun.* I am oblig'd to her for this Relief, 'tis some Satisfaction for the Torment I endur'd.

*Phil.* Madam, he's at the door——shall he come in?

*L. Lay.* No, foolish Girl——let him come another time, must you needs trouble me now?

*Cun.* Has he not fine Toys for a Cabinet?

*Phil.* O yes, the prettiest that you ever saw.

*L. Lay.* Oh the officious Creature! I'll have none of 'em; get you gone, you stupid Creature.

*Cun.* What a tormenting Creature an amorous old Woman is!

*L. Lay.*

18 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*L. Lay.* I may, Sir, without Vanity, acknowledge, that the best part of my Time (in my Husband's days and since) has been employ'd in answering the eager Sollicitations of troublesome, importunate young Men.—I have been persecuted by Men of the greatest Quality in *England*—at this very Instant I am prest to receive the Addresses of a Viscount.

*Cun.* What Viscount, I beseech you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* A Man of noble Birth, his Name's well known—'tis the Viscount *Sans-Terre*, Sir—you seem disturb'd—I hope you are not jealous.

*Cun.* I can never be troubled at your Happiness.

*L. Lay.* Indeed, I will never give you any Cause.

*Enter Prudence.*

Now what come you hither for?

*Pru.* Madam, the Viscount *Sans-Terre* is come.

*Cun.* Thanks to my Stars, now I may breathe a little.

*Pru.* Never was any thing so gallant, Madam—he has half the Fiddles in the City at his heels.

*Cun.* The Rogue will over-act his Part, and spoil all. *[Aside.]*

*L. Lay.* Methinks you are melancholly.

*Cun.* I, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Yes, Sir, I see it well enough——pray let it not disturb you. Now he is come, I must receive him civilly.

*Cun.* By all means, Madam.

*Enter Merryman, Phil. Jeffery, and Fiddles.*

*Mer.* *From the North I came;  
When I heard of the Fame  
Of the Lady Laycock's Beauty;  
I had pass'd for an Ass,  
Had I staid where I was,  
And not done a Viscount's Duty.*

By your Leave, Ladies—which of these is the Aunt—oh, by her Age, this should be she I look for——Pardon me, Madam, that scurvy, that vile word Age to some

some is an Affront, to you 'tis none—for you look younger than your Niece—I was told so before I came, and now I find it true.

*Phil.* What Answer shall I make him, Madam?

*L. Lay.* You are mistaken, Sir, I am the Aunt.

*Mer.* You the Aunt! that's good i'faith—persuade me to that if you can.

*L. Lay.* 'Tis true, Sir, I assure you.

*Mer.* And is this reverend Gentlewoman your Niece?

*L. Lay.* Yes!

*Mer.* Yes; you have a mind to wheedle me—I am not cozen'd so easily.

*L. Lay.* Here's no body intends to cozen you.

*Mer.* Are you indeed the Aunt then?

*L. Lay.* Yes indeed am I, Sir.

*Mer.* I know not whether the Devil tempts me to it, or no, but I could wish 'twere true—for my Mouth waters after you most damnably—but deal ingenuously, which is the Original?

*L. Lay.* I am not much surpriz'd at your Mistake, Sir; but you are obliging, and would flatter me.

*Mer.* Not I, I swear, I am in earnest, Madam—

*Phil.* This Fellow must be a Fool, else 'twere impossible he should mistake so grossly.

*Mer.* If you are the Niece then, you must veil to your Aunt for Youth and Beauty too.

*L. Lay.* You praise me, Sir, too much.

*Mer.* Not I, by *Jupiter*—pray turn about, and let me view you round—I-marry, there's a Shape for you—and such a stately Mien too—pray turn agen, Madam—Lord, what a pretty Childish Air is in that Face of yours!

*L. Lay.* There are those, Sir, that are worse.

*Mer.* There are none that are the fiftieth part so well.

*Pru.* Do you observe how witty the Viscount is?

*L. Lay.* Peace, *Prue*.

*Mer.* The Fame of your Beauty, Madam, has brought me from the North to kiss your Hands.

*L. Lay.* You are too obliging, Sir.

*Mer.* I come of a very ancient Family, Sir, 'tis true; origi-

20 *The AMOROUS WIDOW : or,*

originally we were *French*, the *Sans-Terres* came in with the *Conqueror*, Madam.

*L. Lay.* I believe it——Sir, you are melancholly.

*Mer.* He is so, I observ'd it, Madam——and could hardly forbear laughing at him——Is he troubled with the Spleen?

*L. Lay.* You may excuse him, Sir, he's in Law.

*Mer.* In Law! he had better be in Purgatory——me-thinks you are disordered——are you afraid I shall not like you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* How, Sir?

*Mer.* Let not that trouble you——if you like me as well as I like you, we'll be marry'd immediately.

*L. Lay.* Immediately?

*Mer.* Ay, the sooner 'tis dispatch'd, 'twill be the better.

*L. Lay.* You must allow me a little time to consider, Sir.

*Mer.* No, we'll have no consideration, Widow—I shall get such abundance of young *Sans-Terres* upon this Body of yours——

*L. Lay.* Truly, you make me blush, Sir.

*Mer.* I love to see you blush, it becomes you exceedingly; my Servants are a little tired with their Journey, a few Hours will settle 'em——this Evening they shall entertain you, Madam——you shall see how we spend our time in the North.

*L. Lay.* Where shall it be, Sir?

*Mer.* Here, in your Lodgings, Madam; let me view 'em, the Order and the Neatness of the Rooms is admirable.

*L. Lay.* They will not answer your Expectation, Sir.

*Mer.* Pray let me see your Bedchamber——I never left a Widow's Lodgings before I saw her Bedchamber——come, let me 'squire you, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Some other time, I beseech you.

*Mer.* No, no, it shall be now——lead Brothers of the Fiddle.

*Prw.* This is the way, Sir.

*L. Lay.* This Fellow makes me mad——pray be not jealous, Sir; because I let this Viscount take my Hand.



*Cun.* Do not wrong me so much to think so.

*L. Lay.* Come *Phil*, come you with me. [Exit.

Enter Lovemore.

*Cun. Lovemore*, I have had a fellow-feeling of thy Sufferings, I have been tormented worse than ever you were by that old amorous Devil.

*Lov.* By the Aunt?

*Cun.* The very same: Curse on her Devilship—nothing that's young can come amiss to her.

*Lov.* She must have been a rare Jilt in her Youth.

*Cun.* But Friend, I thought you had forsworn the House; what subtle Business brings you hither now?

*Lov.* 'Tis Love, my Boy, I have an Intrigue here.

*Cun.* You an Intrigue! with whom?

*Lov.* With pretty Mrs. *Brittle*, the Glass-man's Wife, that's Landlord of this House.

*Cun.* Give you good Fortune, Friend.

*Lov.* *Damaris*, her Chambermaid, I have already won, who gives me all the Encouragement I can wish for: She says her Husband's jealous to distraction, and that his Wife loves Company and Courtship most extremely.

*Cun.* Very well, you have ground enough to work upon.

*Lov.* I have a Letter ready, which I must get convey'd to *Damaris*, she'll give it to her Mistress, and send me her Answer instantly. Shall I employ *Jessery*?

*Cun.* Yes, there he is, he'll do it dextrously—farewell, Friend—I'll follow my new-made Viscount, while he is entertaining the old Lady, I may have an Occasion offered me of talking with my Mistress. [Exit.

*Lov. Jessery.*

*Jess.* Sir!

*Lov.* Thou canst convey this Letter very privately.

*Jess.* To one you are in love with—Is't not so?

*Lov.* You are in the right.

*Jess.* Is she Wife, Widow, or Maid, Sir?

*Lov.* The truth is, *Jessery*, 'tis a Citizen's fair Wife, the prettiest little Rogue.

*Jess.*

22 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Jeff.* Do you think this Life will last for ever, Sir? Does nothing come amiss to you—shall no Condition 'scape ye?

*Lov.* Good wise *Jeffery*, spare your Counsel, and deliver this Letter for me——Take it.

*Jeff.* Do not trust me, Sir, I say, do not trust me, I have a damnable squeamish Stomach, and shall spoil this bawdy Business——therefore do not trust me.

*Lov.* What ails the Fellow!

*Jeff.* I have a mind to marry, but I have no mind to be a Cuckold, Sir.

*Love.* Why thou a Cuckold, Fool?

*Jeff.* If I carry this Letter, Sir, and you make a Beast of this honest Citizen, then I am partly the Occasion of it—and ought not I in conscience to expect the same return, when I am marry'd, Sir? If I by accident should see a young brisk Gallant with my Wife, I should presently conclude, that he has done the same for me; therefore, I say again, Sir, do not trust me.

*Lov.* Well, *Jeffery*, the truth is, I have no such Design; I wou'd not believe thy Master, when he told me how scrupulous thou wer't, and feign'd this Story for a Tryal only—farewell, honest *Jeffery*.——I had been in a very fine Condition had I trusted this Rascal with my Mistress's Name—as sure as Fate, this Rogue would have betray'd me—but here's her Husband!

*Enter Brittle.*

Your Servant, Mr. *Brittle*.

*Brit.* Your Friend and *Barnaby*.

*Lov.* Is the Lady *Laycock* in her Chamber?

*Brit.* Yes, Sir.

*Lov.* I am going to wait on her, farewell—I must employ some Fellow that is unknown to the whole Family—and now I think on't, *Merryman* has brought one up that never saw the Town before—a plain simple honest Fellow, *Clodpole* I think they call him, he shall deliver this Letter for me—I'll send for him, and give him Instructions instantly. *[Exit.*

*Brit.* These Gallants flock to this old rich Widow, and make more noise about her, than a Kennel of hungry

gry

gry Hounds about a Carcase of Carrion—my House is grown as common as the Exchange, or Playhouses—where all sorts of Company meet to laugh and talk Bawdy—It makes me mad, stark mad to think on't—I must marry a Gentlewoman with a Pox, and fill my House with her proud vain Kindred, and infect my Wife with their loose lascivious Principles—Well, Barnaby Brittle, you have no body but your self to thank for this—you must marry above your Quality, and now you see the Effect on't.

Enter Wife.

How now Wife, whither away so fast?

Wife. I am going to the Exchange with my Cousin Philadelphia.

Brit. To the Exchange?

Wife. Yes, and thence to see a Play at the Duke's House, where we shall have such Sport.

Brit. How! Sport, Wife?

Wife. 'Tis the pleasant'st Thing in the whole World to see a Flock of wild Gallants fluttering about two or three Ladies in Vizard Masks, and then they talk to 'em so wantonly, and so loud, that they put the very Players out of countenance—'Tis a better Entertainment, than any Part of the Play can be.

Brit. Pray stay: Is this a Dress for Barnaby Brittle's Wife?

Wife. No, but 'tis a Dress for a Gentlewoman, for Sir Peter Pride's Daughter, Sir—you'd have me wear a plain Bombazeen Gown, with my set Hood, my Pendants, and my Ear-Knots hanging o'er 'em; or at best, a pityful D'Oyley's Petticoat; I know better Things, I thank you, Sir—Good-by, I'm afraid my Cousin stays for me.

Brit. Hold, Wife, if you please, you shall not go.

Wife. Indeed Husband, if you please, I will go.

Brit. Truly, my pretty Wife, I shall make you tarry.

Wife. Truly, my sweet-fac'd Husband, you cannot, nor you shall not.

Brit. Indeed I shall.

Wife. Indeed you shall not.

Brit.

24 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Brit.* With your Permission, I shall make you keep me company this Afternoon.

*Wife.* This Afternoon!

*Brit.* Yes, this Afternoon.

*Wife.* I ask your Pardon for that, sweet Husband.

*Brit.* And I ask yours, dear Wife.

*Wife.* It cannot be.

*Brit.* It shall be.

*Wife.* No.

*Brit.* Yes.

*Wife.* I tell you no.

*Brit.* I tell you yes.

*Wife.* You shall not force me to it.

*Brit.* But I shall, if you provoke me.

*Wife.* Well, set your Heart at rest, I will go—and stay me if you can or dare.

*Brit.* Hast thou the Impudence to say this to my Face? do not provoke me, do not.

*Wife.* Where's the Danger, pray?

*Brit.* Do not force me to use you worse than I intended.

*Wife.* The worst you cou'd do, you have done already; you marry'd me against my Will, and do you think I will not be reveng'd for't?

*Brit.* Hold that tongue of yours, or I shall do you a Mischief, the Devil tempts me to it strangely.

*Wife.* Do your worst, I defy you; I am a Gentlewoman on both Sides; by the Father, descended from the Honourable Family of the *Prides*; by the Mother, from the Worshipful Family of the *Laycocks*; and shall I suffer an Under Citizen, a pityful Glass-man to make a Slave of me?

*Brit.* Peace, Peace, I say.

*Wife.* 'Tis true, he's in the Road of Preferment now; he has been Scavenger, and in (time may come to be Churchwarden, and rob the Poor; or to the highest Point of Honour, to be a Livery Man, and march in Triumph on a Lord Mayor's Day, or sail in a new-trimm'd Dung-Boat to *Westminster*, almost as ridiculous as a Riding.

*Brit.* Do not abuse the City, do not.

*Wife.*



*Wife.* I might have marry'd a Merchant, and have had my glass Coach, and my little Chariot, my Women, and my Footboys in Liveries, have had as much Plate, as good Jewels, and as rich Clothes as the best Lady about the Court——And did I lose all this, and marry a sneaking Glassman, that will not allow me Christian Liberty—my Comfort is, I have Parents that will not see me wrong'd; they are now with my Cousin Laycock; I'll to my Lady Mother, she shall know how I am us'd by you. [Exit.]

*Brit.* What shall I do?—I shall be damnably tormented with this Father and Mother of hers—the Mischief is, (when I do complain,) they believe all she says, tho' never so false, and face me down that I am in the wrong still——then the Mother is so proud of her pragmatical Honour, (as all new-made Ladies are) and looks for so much respect, forsooth, that 'tis intolerable——if it goes on at this rate, what will become of me? I know my Fate, there's no avoiding it, I must next Month take up my Habitation in Bedlam; a Judgment every Citizen deserves that marries a Wife from between Temple-bar and St. James's. [Exit.]

*End of the Second Act.*



A C T III.

*Enter Brittle.*

*Brit.* **W**ell! Gentlefolks of Birth and Quality, forsooth, may be fine People for ought I know, but I wish it had been High Treason for 'em to marry any body but one another, I'm sure I've my Belly full of 'em. I have a Wife, that turns up her Nose at her honest

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26 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

honest Neighbours, when they <sup>evenly</sup> call her by my Name: that thinks all my Wealth too little to purchase the honourable Title of her Husband; a Title, that with all my heart, I would give double the Sum to get rid of—My own House is a Hell to me, I never come home, but the Devil in the Shape of some Vexation or other, get's thither before me. Why look you! there he is now!

*Enter Clodpole.*

What the Devil has that Fellow been doing there?

*Clod.* How that Man eyes me!

*Brit.* I am sure he does not know me.

*Clod.* Is he not a Spy, that's set to watch me? he saw me come from the Glass-man's House, and may discover me.

*Brit.* I'll speak to him—A good Day to you, Friend.

*Clod.* The like to you, Sir.

*Brit.* You do not dwell in this House, Friend, do you?

*Clod.* No, Sir, not I, I only came to prepare an Entertainment for to-morrow.

*Brit.* For to-morrow!——tell me who makes it, will you?

*Clod.* Mum!

*Brit.* How?

*Clod.* Peace!

*Brit.* What dost thou mean? you came out of that House.

*Clod.* You must not tell it tho'.

*Brit.* Why?

*Clod.* Good Lord, because——

*Brit.* Of what?

*Clod.* Softly, I am afraid we shall be overheard.

*Brit.* No, never fear it, Man.

*Clod.* The Business I came for, was to deliver a Letter to the Mistress of that House, in the behalf of a young fine Gentleman, but no body must know of this——you understand me.

*Brit.* Yes, yes.

*Clod.* For look'e; I was charg'd not to be seen when I came forth, therefore do not discover me.

*Brit.*

*Brit.* I warrant you.

*Clod.* I can be very secret, when I am commanded, Sir.

*Brit.* I find you can.

*Clod.* Her Husband, they say, is the jealous<sup>est</sup> Coxcomb in the whole City——so ill natur'd a Fellow, that he deserves not to have Love made to his Wife. If this should come to his knowledge, Sir, he'd play the Devil——you understand me.

*Brit.* Yes, yes, very well.

*Clod.* He must know nothing of all this.

*Brit.* No doubt on't.

*Clod.* They'll cozen him, and do it privately,——you understand me.

*Brit.* Ay, ay, no body better: but what's the Gentleman's Name, Friend.

*Clod.* I can never remember these hard Names, I think he's call'd Mr. Love——ay, ay, Mr. Lovemore, he has a brave Estate in our Country, Sir.

*Brit.* Oh, I know him very well, he lodges at——

*Clod.* The Draper's over the way.

*Brit.* The very same.

*Clod.* I assure you, he's the honestest Gentleman I ever was acquainted with——he gave me this Piece of Gold only to carry the Letter to this Gentlewoman——Truly, Sir, we meet with few such Jobs as these in the Country.

*Brit.* Well, have you delivered it to the Lady?

*Clod.* Yes, yes, and there's one *Damaris*, a notable Girl I warrant her, she knew my Business before I spake to her, she carry'd me to her Mistress instantly.

*Brit.* O damn'd Witch!

*Clod.* In troth, that *Damaris* is a very pretty Wench——the Match between us is half made, for I am willing——there wants but her consent.

*Brit.* Ay, you'll soon have that, to be sure. What Answer made the Gentlewoman to the young Gallant's Letter?

*Clod.* She bid me tell him——stay, can I remember it? that she was very much oblig'd to him for his Kindness to her, and desir'd him to appoint some Place,

28 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

where they might safely meet, and be very careful, that the Husband did not discover 'em.

*Brit.* Ah vile Woman!

*Clod.* For you must know the Cuckold her Husband is very suspicious of her—you understand me.

*Brit.* Extremely well.

*Clod.* In good faith, 'twill be very pleasant, for he must know of none of their private Meetings—you understand me.

*Brit.* Ay, ay, to a tittle.

*Clod.* Then he will be fitted for his Jealousy—will it not be very pleasant?

*Brit.* Yes, Certainly.

*Clod.* Farewell, mum, not a Word of this—be sure you keep this secret fromt he Husband—you understand me.

*Brit.* Never doubt me.

*Clod.* For my part, I'll make as if I knew nothing of it—I can be cunning when I have a mind to't; they shall get nothing out of me, I warrant 'em—you understand me, farewell. [Exit.

*Brit.* Good-by—Well, *Barnaby Brittle*—now you find how your Wife uses you—this 'tis to marry a Gentlewoman—she may play you a thousand impudent Tricks, and her Gentility, forsooth, shall bear her out in't: had she been a good honest Tradesman's Daughter, I might have taken the Liberty of the City, and have drub'd her from *Wapping* to *Westminster*, but I must marry a Gentlewoman, must I—I am mad, and cou'd find in my heart to beat my self—to promise a meeting to a wild young Fellow, that will make no more of taking her—O Lud! no, I'll not endure it, I'll complain to her Parents instantly—now they shall see I have reason for my Jealousy; and here they come most opportunely for't.

*Enter Sir Peter Pride, and Lady Pride.*

*Sir Pet.* You seem disorder'd, Son, pray what's the matter now?

*Brit.* Oh, I am mad, stark mad.

*L. Pri.*



*L. Pri.* Good Lord, Son, where were you bred, that you use us with no more respect—Is that Hat of yours nail'd on?

*Brit.* Faith, Mother in Law, I have other Things to trouble my Head withall.

*L. Pri.* Is it not possible, Son, to teach you how to behave your self to Persons of our Quality?

*Brit.* Pray, Mother in Law, forbear your Instructions now.

*L. Pri.* Agen! will you never leave that ill-bred Trick of calling me Mother in Law? Is't not as easy for you to say Madam?

*Brit.* 'Slife, if you call me Son in Law, I know no reason why I may not call you Mother in Law.

*L. Pri.* Yes, there are many Reasons; if you don't know 'em, I'll instruct you, Son—Tho' I am your Mother in Law, yet 'tis not fit for you to use that Word to a Person of my Quality——there's a great difference betwixt you and me——pray know your self, and keep your distance too.

*Sir Pet.* Enough, Love——say no more on't.

*L. Pri.* Good Lord, Sir *Peter*, you are the strangest Man in the whole World——you make ev'ry one so familiar with you, that they never give you that Respect that's due to you.

*Sir Pet.* Forbear your Instructions——I have show'd by several Actions of my Life, that I am one that will not lose any thing, that belongs to me; therefore, Son in Law, proceed——tell me the Business.

*Brit.* Well, since I must, I'll tell it you methodically,——  
*Sir Peter*——

*Sir Pet.* Softly, Son in Law——'tis ill breeding to call Persons of my Birth and Education, thus by their Names——to those above us, we should say, to the Ladies, Madam; to the Men, Sir, short.

*Brit.* Why then, Sir, short, (if you'll have it so) my Wife makes me——

*Sir Pet.* Nay but Son, know you must not say, your Wife, when you speak of our Daughter, Son.

*Brit.* 'Sdeath, will you make me mad—is not my Wife my Wife?

*Sir Pet.*

30 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Sir Pet.* Yes, Son in Law, she is your Wife, but 'tis not fit that you should call her so; you cou'd do no more, if you were marry'd to your Equal.

*Brit.* Psha! what a Rout and a Fuss is here! the Devil take all Ceremonies——for the Love of Goodness, lay your Gentility aside, and give me leave to speak what I have a mind to——I tell you I am ill satisfy'd with my Marriage.

*Sir Pet.* Your Reason, Son in Law.

*L. Pri.* Are you displeas'd with what you have gain'd so much by?

*Brit.* Gain'd, Madam——(since it must be Madam)——what have I gain'd——'twas well for you, you met with such a Fool, else your Gentility had been in the Mire, I am sure my Money has stopt many a Gap, that's all I have gain'd by it—Madam!

*Sir Pet.* Do you think it no Advantage then, to be ally'd to the Honourable Family of the *Prides*?

*L. Pri.* And to the Worshipful Family of the *Laycocks*, whence I, Son, had the honour to be deriv'd——a noble Family, that will make all your Children Gentlemen.

*Brit.* Yes, yes, I believe my Children may be Gentlemen, for they're like to be of a Gentleman's getting; but I shall be a Cuckold, Madam, unless Order be taken speedily.

*Sir Pet.* Pray, Son explain yourself, we will not maintain her in ill Actions, we'll be the first shall do you Justice on her.

*L. Pri.* Well, 'tis very strange; she was brought up with all Severity imaginable.

*Brit.* There's a young Gentleman makes Love to her, and she receives his Courtship—this Gallant under pretence of visiting my Lady *Laycock*, your Kinswoman, who lodges in my House, watches for an Occasion to corrupt her.

*L. Pri.* By this good Day, I had rather strangle her with my own hands, than she shou'd stain the Honour of her Family.

*Sir Pet.* And I'll run my Sword thro' her and her Gallant, if she forfeits her Reputation.

*Brit.*

# The WANTON WIFE. 31

*Brit.* I have told you what's Fact, and desire you to take it into your consideration.

*Sir Pet.* 'Tis well known I have Courage, Son—I'll call this Gallant to account for this—But are you sure all this is true?

*Brit.* Ay, ay, too sure on't.

*Sir Pet.* Have a care, Son, for these are ticklish Points, and ought not to be dally'd with.

*Brit.* All I have told you, is a certain Truth.

*Sir Pet.* Go you, Love, and talk with your Daughter, while my Son in Law and I seek out this amorous Gallant. [*Exit Lady Pride.*] Follow me, Son, you shall see how vigorously I'll manage this Affair.

*Enter Lovemore.*

*Brit.* Here he comes, Sir, to save you the trouble of seeking him.

*Sir Pet.* Do you know me, Sir?

*Lov.* No, Sir, that I well remember.

*Sir Pet.* I am call'd Sir *Peter Pride*.

*Lov.* I am glad to hear it, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* I am known at Court, I had the Honour in my Youth to behave my self gallantly in the late Civil War—I was in ev'ry Battle that was fought in the Kingdom from *Edge-hill* to *Naseby*.

*Lov.* Very good, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* My Father, Sir *John Pride*, had the Honour to command in Person, at the famous Battle of *Lutzen*, where the great *Gustavus* fell—my Grandfather, Sir *Alexander Pride*, was so considerable in his Time, that he had Permission granted him by the Parliament, to sell his Land, and follow Sir *Francis Drake* to the *West-Indies*.

*Lov.* Sir, I believe all this.

*Sir Pet.* Now, know Sir, I am inform'd, that you make Love to a young Gentlewoman, for whom, I am concern'd—because she is my Daughter, Sir, and this Man, you see here, has the Honour to be marry'd to her—I am glad I have found you, to know of you the Bottom of this Business.

*Lov.* Pray, Sir, who told you this?

32 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Sir Pet.* One that knows it to be true, Sir.

*Lov.* Who-e'er reported this of me was a Rascal—  
tell me his Name, I'll cut the Villain's Tongue out.

*Brit.* What will become of me now? [*Aside.*]

*Lov.* This, Sir, you say, is the Gentlewoman's Husband.

*Sir Pet.* Yes, Sir, 'twas he made this Complaint to me?

*Lov.* You Sir? did you? 'tis well you have the Honour to be related to *Sir Peter Pride*, else I should teach you what it were to raise such Reports of me.

*Enter Lady Pride, Wife, Damaris.*

*L. Pri.* Well, Jealousy's a very troublesome thing—I bring my Daughter to clear herself in the Face of the whole World.

*Lov.* Was it you, Madam, that told your Husband, I made Love to you?

*Wife.* I Sir? pray how shou'd I tell him so—you never spoke to me before, that I remember.

*L. Pri.* Look you there, I knew she was abus'd.

*Wife.* But since I am suspected, I will not be suspected, Sir, for nothing—if you do love me, Sir, pursue it, you shall find me willing to entertain you, and pray let me advise you, Sir, to teach your Servant more Discretion, when you employ him next; and when you write, be sure to send it when my Husband's absent—and when you have a mind to court me, Sir, you need but come, and on my Word I will receive your Visit as I ought.

*Lov.* Pray be not so hasty, Madam—you need not give me these Instructions, nor scandalize yourself thus to no purpose—Pray, Madam, who says I am in love with you?

*Wife.* The Company you see here—I know nothing but what they tell me, Sir.

*Lov.* They, Madam, may say their Pleasures, but you best know if once I made love to you.

*Wife.* If you had, you shou'd have been welcome, Sir.

*Lov.* Alas, Madam, you need not be afraid of me—

*tis*



'tis not my Nature to debauch young Ladies, I have more respect for you, and more Reverence for your brave Father, and honourable Mother, than to have the least Thought of abusing you.

*L. Pri.* Now Son, do you hear this.

*Sir Per.* Are you yet satisfy'd—what say you now?

*Brit.* I say it is all damn'd Cunning, and since I must speak, 'tis not half an Hour since she receiv'd a Letter from him.

*Wife.* Did I receive a Letter from him?

*Lov.* Or did I send her one?

*Wife.* *Damaris*, is this true?

*Dam.* O Sir! I never heard a falser thing.

*Brit.* Hold your peace, Carrion, I know your Tricks too well; you were to have introduc'd this Gallant.

*Dam.* Who I?

*Brit.* Yes, Hussy, you.

*Dam.* How full of Malice is this wicked World, to suspect me for such a thing? me! who am Innocence it self.

*Brit.* Hold your tongue, Baggage.

*Dam.* Shall I endure this, Madam.

*Brit.* Peace, or I shall cudgel your Hide for you, you are not a Gentleman's Daughter, I may do what I will with you.

*Wife.* This is such an Abuse, I have not power to answer him—well, 'tis a horrible thing, that a Husband should have so little Grace to accuse his own Wife, because she does nothing to him, but what she ought—alas, if I am to be blam'd, 'tis for loving him too well.

*Dam.* So it is, Madam.

*Wife.* Ay *Damaris*, that's my greatest Misfortune, I wish 'twere in my Nature to entertain a Gallant, I were not then to be lamented so much—but to be thus wrongfully accus'd, who can endure it? I will not tarry to be abus'd thus. [Exit.

*L. Pri.* Go jealous Coxcomb, go—thou dost not deserve to have such an honest Woman to thy Wife.

*Dam.* No, Madam, he deserves to be made what he fears to be—Truly, Sir, I think you ought to make

34 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

love to my Mistress, if 'twere for nothing but to punish him——If I were in your place, I am sure I would; and since he has accus'd me, do it, Sir, I promise you, you shall have my Assistance. [Exit.

*Sir Pet.* Truly, Son, you deserve all this: they threaten you with——your ridiculous Behaviour sets all the World against you.

*L. Pri.* Go Clown, and learn to use a Gentlewoman better——let's hear no more such Complaints, I'd wish you——I'll follow her, my Dear, and comfort her.

[Exit.

*Sir Pet.* Ay do, my Lady.

*Brit.* Why this is the Devil, to be thought in the Wrong, when a Man's in the Right; but I can get no body to believe me.

*Lov.* You see how unjustly I have been accus'd, Sir, you are a Man of Honour, I demand Satisfaction of you for this Affront I have receiv'd.

*Sir Pet.* 'Tis but just, and you shall have it, Sir——Come, Son, give the Gentleman Satisfaction.

*Brit.* Satisfaction, Sir! for what?

*Sir Pet.* For accusing him thus falsely.

*Brit.* I don't believe I have accus'd him falsely.

*Sir Pet.* That's all one, he denies it, and 'tis enough if a Gentleman denies what he has said.

*Brit.* Very well——if I find him in Bed with my Wife, and he denies it, I must ask him forgiveness; Is it so?

*Sir Pet.* No more Delays——but do as I command you.

*Brit.* What will you have me do?

*Sir Pet.* Trust me, you shall not do too much——first take off your Hat, for he's a Gentleman, and you are none.

*Brit.* 'Sdeath, will you distract me, Sir?

*Sir Pet.* Do it, I say——that's well——say after me——Sir.

*Brit.* Sir.

*Sir Pet.* I ask your Pardon.

*Brit.* I ask your Pardon.

*Sir Pet.* For the ill Thoughts I had of you.

*Brit.* For the ill Thoughts I had of you.

*Brit.*

# The WANTON WIFE. 35

*Sir Pet.* I had not then the Honour to be known to you.

*Brit.* I had not then the Honour to be known to you.

*Sir Pet.* But now, Sir, I beseech you to believe—

*Brit.* But now, Sir, I beseech you to believe—

*Sir Pet.* That I am, Sir, for ever your humble Servant.

*Brit.* How! would you have me be Servant to him that would make me a Cuckold, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* How's this?

*Love.* 'Tis enough, Sir, I am satisfy'd.

*Sir Pet.* No, Sir, he shall say it in form——That I am for ever your humble Servant.

*Brit.* That I am for ever your humble Servant. [*Ex.*]

*Love.* I am yours, with all my heart, Sir, and will forget what's past—I have troubled you too much—your Servant, Sir.

*Sir Pet.* Sir your humble Servant, now I hope you're convinc'd my Son is match'd into a Family that will not see him wrong'd. [*Exit.*]

*Love.* This Mistress of mine is the prettiest Rogue that ever I was acquainted with, and yet her Wit is more surprizing than her Beauty—to fool her Father, Mother and Husband—to declare her Love to me before their faces, and give me Instructions how to behave myself in my Amour, is a Pleasure above Expression.

*Enter Prudence.*

Oh, *Prudence*! you are an excellent Centinel indeed; you let the Lovers be surpriz'd by the Enemy.

*Pru.* None, Sir, can prevent Destiny.

*Love.* *Jack Cunningham*, I confess, is fallen into very good hands.

*Pru.* He is so, let him get out of 'em, if he can.

*Love.* And is that all the Pity thou hast for him?

*Pru.* Since you are so charitably inclin'd, do you relieve him; and for your Encouragement, I assure you my Lady loves not him as well as she does you.

*Love.* Love me! 'tis impossible!

*Pru.* 'Tis true, she confest it to me yesterday——why are you so thoughtful, Sir?

*Love.* I am studying what horrid Crime I have committed to make an old Woman in love with me.

*Enter*

36 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Enter Cunningham, Philadelphia.*

*What, you have made an Escape at last?*

*Cun.* Yes, but I fear Fortune's too kind long to continue so—but the Viscount gives us some hopes—he has been almost an Hour praising eight or nine Pictures of the Aunt's own drawing, which wins her very Heart.

*Phil.* Will she not quarrel with me for leaving her, Sir?

*Lov.* She ought to be most angry with you, Sir Knight of the enchanted Lady——for 'tis Enchantment sure to love at Fifty.

*Cun.* Very well, Sir—my time may come again to laugh at you.

*Pru.* Mr. Lovemore has the Advantage of you, he is the Favourite, he is the best beloved.

*Cun.* I should not envy him, if *Philadelphia* would pity me.

*Phil.* Were I assur'd of your Fidelity, I durst then promise you.

*Cun.* Pray, Madam, let my Friend be my Security, he knows my Heart, let him be Witness of our Loves.

*Pru.* Come, Madam, give Mr. *Cunningham* your Hand.

*Phil.* I give you, Sir, my Hand, and promise you my Love, on the Condition you continue constant.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Pru.* Have a care what you do, Sir, here's her Aunt.

*Cun.* Fear nothing, Madam, I'll recover all——before the Expiration of two Years you shall have a long and dangerous Sickness.

*Phil.* Pray go on, Sir.

*Cun.* This Line, that almost joins here to this Angle, signifies the Death of some Relation, whose Fortune you shall inherit, Madam.

*Phil.* That, Sir, is good enough.

*Cun.* But yet you shall not long enjoy it, Madam——for this Line that joins to this Triangle is an undoubted Sign,



## The WANTON WIFE. 37

Sign, you shall suddenly change your Religion, and end your Days in a Nunnery.

*Phil.* I am apt to credit this, for my Aunt us'd to tell me I was fit for nothing but a Nunnery.

*Lov.* Does this Line signify a Religious Life?

*L. Lay.* What's the Business here? what are you doing with my Niece's Hand?

*Cun.* I understand a little Palmistry, and begg'd her Madam, to let me tell her Fortune.

*L. Lay.* How do you find it, Sir.

*Cun.* Truly, Madam, she's in great danger of being made a Nun.

*L. Lay.* Then she will be too happy, Sir—I do not love to change my Religion; but if we had a Nunnery for Protestants, and I were of her Age, it should be the first thing I would do—there's nothing but Tranquillity in a Convent—and in the World nothing but Fears and Jealousies, and too many that take Husbands do but marry themselves to death.

*Phil.* There are mighty Numbers that seek their own Deaths then, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Who taught you to discourse of this Subject, Mistress?

*Lov.* I must change the Discourse——This Viscount's Humour, Madam, pleases me extremely—he seems a very honest Gentleman.

*L. Lay.* He does not strain much for his Compliments, whatever he thinks, he says.

*Lov.* He has quickly left you, Madam.

*L. Lay.* No, Sir, he's still above, admiring some little Drawings of mine—Pray Sir, do me the favour to keep him Company a while, and I'll come to you.

*Lov.* He'll think himself neglected by you, Madam.

*L. Lay.* His Goodness will excuse me—speak to your Friend to take my Niece with him.

*Cun.* If thou lov'st me, do not leave me.

*Lov.* I must, I shall be suspected if I do not.

*L. Lay.* *Phil.*, bear Mr. Lovemore Company a while.

*Phil.* Lord, Madam, shall I be left alone with him?

*L. Lay.* You are wondrous scrupulous—no, Prudence shall follow you.

*Cun.*

38 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Cun.* What will become of me now? I shall be teaz'd to death. [*Aside.*]

*L. Lay.* Are you not pleas'd, Sir, to see me shift 'em off, that I may be alone with you.

*Cun.* What will the Viscount, or your Niece think of it?

*L. Lay.* Alas, she's an innocent Girl, that understands nothing, and for the Viscount, I made my Excuse to him, Sir, when I left him—but if it be a Fault, you ought to pardon it, since my Love to you made me commit it.

*Cun.* Madam——

*L. Lay.* You have shew'd fitch Candour in your Proceedings, and join'd such Honesty with your discreet Passion, that tho' Widowhood be very pleasing to me, yet I shou'd think myself ungrateful now to keep you longer in Despair—throw off your Melancholly, I know your Mind, Sir, you wou'd marry me, I give you my Consent, are you now pleas'd?

*Cun.* Oh Madam, you have rais'd me to the highest Pitch of Happiness—but when you are so generous, shall I be ungrateful—the Viscount *Sans-Terre* loves you, and can I without a Crime deprive you of that Honour?

*L. Lay.* I fear'd, Sir, you were jealous; but to cure you, know I intend to marry my Niece to the Viscount; he will not have much cause to complain, for she is young and handsome enough for a Wife—you are discreet, and may persuade her to't—do it, and you shall see I will not retard your Happiness—I love you Sir, and am resolv'd we'll be privately marry'd to-morrow Morning—no body shall know of it but *Prudence*—her I dare trust.

*Cun.* To-morrow Morning! 'Sdeath, how shall I scape her now? oh! [*Aside.*]

*L. Lay.* Why do you sigh, Sir?

*Cun.* Ah Madam, why did you not tell me this yesterday? my Love had then scrupled at nothing, nor had *Tom Lovemore* then discover'd his.

*L. Lay.* Why, does your Friend love me, Sir?

*Cun.* Madam, he dies for you.

*L. Lay.*

*L. Lay.* Truly, Sir, you surprize me—how long have you known it?

*Cun.* Too soon for my Quiet, and too late to be avoided now—you may remember, Madam, he came into your Closet lately, and seeing the Viscount with you, he started suddenly, and was so much disorder'd, all took notice of it—he ask'd me privately if he pretended to your Ladyship, and when I told him that he did, he cry'd, I am the most unfortunate of Men—I love her, Friend, more than I love my Life; and if thou dost not find some means to sustain my dying Hopes, henceforth expect to see thy Friend no more. At this I could not forbear sighing, nor tell him we were equally unfortunate, for I was your Adorer too, and that you were acquainted with my Flame—then you have prevented me, he said; may you be happy in each other, and fear not me; for I will die a thousand Deaths rather than complain, or confess I love her—then struggling with his Passion, he left me, and mix'd himself with the Company.

*L. Lay.* Truly, Sir, it rejoices me to find there is such Friendship, and so much Love and Honour still in the World—I warrant you I'll draw this Secret from him.

*Cun.* All your Endeavours, Madam, will be fruitless.

*L. Lay.* Well, Sir, whether I am destin'd for you or him, I am resolv'd my Niece shall marry this Viscount: here he is!

*Enter Merryman, Phil. and Prudence.*

*Mer.* How, Madam, are you alone with this young Gallant?

*Cun.* I met her here by Accident.

*Mer.* The Devil you did—I find these splenetick Men, when the Fit's off, are madder after a handsome Woman, than we that are always in good Humour—Well, Madam, take your Course, we shall see who will repent of it first.

*L. Lay.* Ah, *Prudence*, I long to be alone with thee—I have something of that Consequence to tell thee.

*Mer.* What, always whispering to your Confidant—the Devil's in that Man that confides much in a handsome Woman—they value their Beauties by the multiplicity

40 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

plcity of their Servants—I fear you are of that Humour, Madam, you eye that young Spark so much:

*L. Lay.* Indeed you wrong me, Sir.

*Mer.* Those Eyes of yours, Lady *Laycock*, have a pretty kind of I know not what in them—a certain sweet Sourness, that is so savoury to me, that I cannot look on 'em, but my Stomach heaves, and my Heart goes a pit-a-pat; pray feel it, Madam.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* My Lord, your Servants bid me tell you, they have prepar'd what you commanded 'em.

*Mer.* 'Tis for your Entertainment, my fair Mistress, go bid 'em enter.

*L. Lay.* *Prudence*, seek out Mr. *Lovemore*, and bring me word where I may speak with him conveniently—what are you saying to my Niece, Mr. *Cunningham*?

*Phil.* Why, Madam, he desires me——

*L. Lay.* What *Phil*?

*Can.* To walk a turn or two in the Garden with me; and she is so nice to deny me.

*L. Lay.* If that be all, you may go with him, *Phil*.

*Mer.* A ha! I smell the Knavery; he loves you; and dares not declare his Passion before me, and now is gone to acquaint your Niece with it—'tis very well.

*L. Lay.* Indeed, my Lord, you are too suspicious.

*Mer.* I cannot be too watchful; they would not leave us without Design.

*L. Lay.* I assure your Lordship he has been praising your Person and good Qualities.

*Mer.* He must be damnably ill-natur'd if he did not—ah Widow, if thou knew'st all my Virtues! what, are they gone? Come, Madam, P'faith well after 'em, and spoil their Sport.

*End of the Third Act.*

A C T





ACT IV.

Clodpole, Damaris.

*Dam.* I Guess'd at first, this Business came from you.

*Clod.* In good faith, *Damaris*, I only spoke two or three Words to a Man that saw me come out of your House, to desire him not to speak of it, and he betray'd me—your Neighbours are horribly given to prating.

*Dam.* Mr. *Lovemore* made an excellent Choice, when he pickt you out for his Embassador—he's like to make a successful Treaty on't.

*Clod.* Hereafter I'll be cunninger, and take more care.

*Dam.* Indeed 'tis time.

*Clod.* Prithee no more o'that; hear me a little.

*Dam.* What should I hear?

*Clod.* Turn thy Face towards me.

*Dam.* Well, Sir, what now?

*Clod.* *Damaris*, Mrs. *Damaris*.

*Dam.* What ail'st thou?

*Clod.* Can'st thou not guess what I would say to thee?

*Dam.* No, by my troth, not I.

*Clod.* Why then, I love thee, *Damaris*.

*Dam.* Indeed!

*Clod.* Yes indeed do I, or the Devil take me—I hope you'll believe me, when I swear.

*Dam.* In good time.

*Clod.* I never look upon thee, but my Heart jolts in my Breast, like a Cart in an uneven Way—you understand me.

*Dam.* An excellent Simile!

*Clod.* What dost thou do, to make thy self look so prettily?

*Dam.* No more than others do.

*Clod.*

42 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Clod.* We won't make much ado about this Business, but if you will marry me——

*Dam.* Stand off, or I shall box you.

*Clod.* Cruel, savage, barbarous, inhuman Creature!

*Dam.* Be gone, and tell him I'll deliver his Letter carefully.

*Clod.* Farewell, Flint, Pebble, Rock, Marble; or any thing, that's harder. [Exit.]

*Dam.* Here she comes with her Husband, I must hide my self 'till he is gone. [Exit.]

*Enter Brittle, and Wife.*

*Brit.* No, no, I'm not so easily deceiv'd, I am sure the Complaint I made was just, I have better Eyes than you imagine, and can see thro' all your Disguises, Mistresses.

*Enter Lovemore.*

*Lov.* Yonder she is—how prettily she looks!——  
'Sdeath, there's her Husband with her.

*Brit.* I find the little Respect you have for the sacred Knot that ties us—nay, leave your Curt'ring, that is not the Respect I am talking of, therefore, do not make sport with it.

*Wife.* Pray, what do I make Sport with?

*Brit.* I see it well enough,—look there, I know you stand upon your Gentility, and think me much below you—agen—no more of this Foolery—the Respect I meant, was not to my Person, but to the sacred Tye of Matrimony—you need not shrug up your Shoulders, 'tis no such slight Thing, as you make it, Mistresses.

*Wife.* I shrug up my Shoulders?

*Brit.* I saw you well enough—I tell you again, Marriage is a sacred Thing—and ought to be more esteem'd with you than it is—'tis a burning shame, you should abuse it so—don't toss your Head, nor make mouths at me, do not.

*Wife.* I know not what you mean.

*Brit.* You mock me, because I was not born a Gentleman, but we have no Whores in our Family—the Brittles were always accounted honest.

*Lov.*

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*Lov.* If he should catch me here, I should spoil all; I find by the signs she makes, she wou'd have me gone—'tis the prettiest, wittiest Rogue in *Christendom*.

*Wife.* Prithee Dear, be not so jealous of me.

*Brit.* Pray mend your Manners then.

*Wife.* You shall, Love, allow me, a little Freedom, indeed you shall—what harm is it, now and then to take the Air in *Hyde-Park*, in my Lady *Laycock's* Coach, to go with 'em to a Play, or to a Ball; alas, I mean no Harm.

*Lov.* She waves her Hand, to have me gone—if I stay longer now, I shall offend her. [*Exit, clapping the Door.*]

*Brit.* Ha! what Noise was that?

*Wife.* You are afraid of your own Shadow, are you?

*Brit.* Here you suffer a wild young Fellow to come after you.

*Wife.* Is it my Fault; what would you have me do?

*Brit.* I wou'd have you do as an honest Woman shou'd do, that means to please no body but her own Husband—I am sure no Gallant follows any Woman long without Encouragement—there is a certain Wantonness in the Face, with languishing Eyes, and dying Looks, which draws them, as a Honey-Pot draws Wasps—but modest Women send 'em away quickly.

*Wife.* Why shou'd I send any Gentleman away? I think it no Scandal, nor am I offended with any Man, that thinks me handsome—no, on the contrary, I am pleas'd with it.

*Brit.* What Part plays the poor Husband, when the Wife loves Courtship—

*Wife.* The Part of an honest Man, that's glad to see his Wife so considerable, to gain the Esteem of such fine, such well-bred Gentlemen.

*Brit.* Your Servant, Madam, 'twas never my intention to do so—the *Brittles* were never yet accustomed to that Mode.

*Wife.* But the *Brittles* may accustom themselves to it—if they please; for my part, I declare it publickly, I have no Design yet, to renounce the World, to be bury'd alive with a Husband—do you think, because we

#### 44 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

are marry'd, we must instantly break off all Commerce with the Living, and be dead to all the Pleasures of the World——no, no, the Tyranny of Husbands is intolerable, to think we shou'd die to all others, and only live to them —— I do so? no, I am resolv'd, I will not die so young.

*Brit.* Do you remember the Promises you made me in the Church?

*Wife.* I made none willingly, you forc'd 'em from me——did you ask my Consent if I wou'd marry you? —no, you only ask'd my Father's and Mother's, and you'd do well only to complain to them of the wrong which may be done you—and since I never told you I wou'd marry you, and you did it without consulting me, I do not think my self oblig'd to be your Slave, still subject to your Will——no, I am resolv'd to live pleasantly, whilst my Youth lasts, and take all Liberty my Age requires—I'll see the World, have the Pleasure to be courted as well as others are—prepare your self henceforth to suffer it, and thank Heav'n if I do no worse.

*Brit.* Very fine, I am your Husband, and tell you, I do not understand such vile lewd Doings.

*Wife.* And I am your Wife, and tell you I do understand 'em, and mean to practise 'em.

*Brit.* I have a strong Temptation to spoil that Face of hers——her Gallants wou'd quickly leave her, if I shou'd——I'll be gone, for she's so provoking, that if I stay longer, I shall do it. [Exit.]

*Enter Damaris.*

*Dam.* Ah Madam, I was impatient till he was gone, that I might deliver this Letter to you—you know from whom it comes.

*Wife.* Give it me, *Damaris*.

*Dam.* I find he understood your meaning, Madam.

*Wife.* Ah *Damaris*——how rarely this Gallant expresses himself in this Letter! —well, these Courtiers in their Discourse, their Writings, and their Mien, have a strange agreeable Air——what pitiful Creatures these Citizens are to 'em?

*Dam.*



*Dam.* I believe the *Brittles* have not pleas'd you much since your Acquaintance with these Gentlemen.

*Wife.* Stay here, I'll write an Answer, and return instantly. [Exit.

*Enter Lovemore, Clodpole.*

*Dam.* I need not bid her give it an agreeable Air. Truly Sir, you employ a very prating Messenger.

*Love.* I durst not send a Servant of my own, for fear of a Discovery—but thou, dear *Damaris*, hast oblig'd me, and I'll be grateful to thee.

*Dam.* By no means, I have done nothing but what your Merit will exact from ev'ry one—but if it lies in my pow'r to do you any further Service, Sir, be pleas'd to command me freely.

*Love.* Hast thou giv'n my Letter to thy Mistress?

*Dam.* I have, and she is gone to answer it.

*Love.* Is it not possible to speak with her now?

*Dam.* Yes Sir; her Husband's abroad, follow me, I'll bring you to her.

*Love.* But will she not be angry, *Damaris*—or may not her Husband return, and surprize me with her?

*Dam.* She's more afraid of her Father and Mother—if she can conceal it from them, she fears no body else.

*Love.* On then, I will be wholly led by thee. [Exit.

*Clod.* What a damnable cunning Rogue shall I have for a Wife? she has more Wit than half the Wenches in our Country have.

*Enter Brittle out of the Shop.*

*Brit.* Oh, here's my Man agen!—wou'd I cou'd get him to witness what he told me, to my Father and Mother in Law, perhaps they wou'd believe him, tho' not me.

*Clod.* A ha! Mr. *Babler*, are you there—you can't hear a Secret, but you must be prating, must you?

*Brit.* Who I?

*Clod.* Yes you! you told the Husband all, and made such a stir, that no body cou'd endure the House for you—I am glad I know what a long Tongue you have, I'll trust you with no more Secrets, I warrant you.

*Brit.*

46 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Brit.* Nay, but Friend.

*Clod.* If you had held your tongue, I cou'd have told you what they are doing now, but for a Punishment you shall get nothing out of me, you understand me.

*Brit.* Nay, prithee let me know.

*Clod.* No, no, you see what 'tis to be a Babler; you shall know nothing by me, I assure you.

*Brit.* Stay, stay a little.

*Clod.* No.

*Brit.* I'll speak but one Word to thee.

*Clod.* No, you'd fain get something out of me, but you are cozen'd now, you understand me.

*Brit.* 'Tis about something else I'd speak to thee.

*Clod.* I know your Business well enough—you'd have me tell you that the young Gentleman gave Money to *Damaris*, and that she carry'd him to her Mistress instantly—but I am not such an Ass—I warrant you.

*Brit.* Prithee hear me.

*Clod.* No.

*Brit.* I will give thee.

*Clod.* But I will not take it—you understand me. [Ex.]

*Brit.* I cou'd not make the use I intended of this simple Fellow; but something scap'd him that may do as well.—If I cou'd but bring the Father and Mother to see their Daughter private with her Gallant, why certainly they would believe their own Eyes—but stay, how shou'd I be sure, he's with her now—If I go in, I shall fright him away, and my saying afterwards I saw him with her, nay, my swearing it, signifies no more than saying I dreamt so, for my impudent Wife will certainly face me down in it: And shou'd I fetch her Parents, and the Spark shou'd be gone before they come, why that will be the same thing. What shall I do? adad! this is a very hard Circumstance that a Man shall be sure to be a Cuckold, and no body believe it but himself; 'tis not so with my Neighbours, for, if you step into *Change-Alley*, you'll see 1000 Honest Fellows there, that every body believes to be Cuckolds, but themselves. Hold! I have it I'll steal

in

in softly to see if he's with her still—a-lack a-day!  
O-lud! it's too true, I see him thro' the Key-hole! ah!  
shameful Jade! she'll certainly come to the Gallows,  
and here come her Parents, the very Judges that are to  
condemn her.

*Enter Sir Peter Pride, L. Pride.*

O Sir, I could not be believ'd to-day—your Daughter  
carry'd it swimmingly then; but now 'tis in my pow'r  
to prove it to you.

*Sir Pet.* What, Son in Law, are you at this agen?

*Brit.* Yes, Sir; and had never more reason for't.

*L. Pri.* I protest, Son; you break my Head with  
these foolish idle Stories.

*Brit.* Your Daughter, Madam, does what is worse to  
mine.

*L. Pri.* Will you never leave these extravagant Com-  
plaints?

*Brit.* No Madam, not till I can leave a dishonest  
Wife.

*L. Pri.* Learn to speak better of our Daughter, I'd  
wish you.

*Sir Pet.* Use better Language, Son, lest you repent it.

*Brit.* Methinks you might give the Loser leave to  
speak.

*L. Pri.* Remember you have marry'd a Gentle-  
woman.

*Brit.* I do remember it, Madam, to my Grief.

*Sir Pet.* Then remember to speak of her with more  
respect.

*Brit.* Yes, if she'd use me with more honesty—  
because she's a Gentlewoman, she may make what  
Monster she will of me; and I must not say my Eyes  
are my own, nor dare to complain of it.

*Sir Pet.* What wou'd you say? did she not this Morn-  
ing tell you, she knew not the Man you accus'd her of?

*Brit.* Yes, but what will you say, if I shew you  
this Gallant and she together?

*L. Pri.* Together! where?

*Brit.* Here, Madam, in my House.

*L. Pri.* If what you say be true, I'll tear her Eyes  
out.

*Sir Pet.*

48 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Sir Pet.* Yes Son, for nothing's dearer to me than the Honour of our Family—if you can prove this, we'll renounce her, and leave her to your Chastisement.

*Brit.* Pray follow me.

*L. Pri.* Take heed you serve us not such another Trick as you did to-day.

*Brit.* Lord, I say, do you follow me. [*Exit.*

*Enter Lovemore, Wife, Damaris—and Brittle,*

*Sir Peter, and Lady Pride behind.*

Look there now Madam, have I told you true?

*Wife.* Alas Sir, I am afraid of being surpriz'd, we must be very careful.

*Love.* Then Madam, give me leave to wait on you this Night.

*Wife.* If you will come when all are asleep, I'll try what I can do.

*Dam.* Madam, we are undone, your Father, Mother, and Husband are all here.

*Brit.* Let's steal behind, and over-hear 'em.

*Love.* 'Sdeath! what shall we do?

*Wife.* Trust me, and be not surpriz'd, what'er I say or do—what; you put a Trick upon me to-day, did you? you dissembled your Passion: They told me indeed you were in Love with me, and had Designs upon me; I thought I did enough then to make any honest Man ashamed of such wicked Courses; then you deny'd it confidently; and have you the Impudence to come the very same Day to my House, to tell me your foolish Love, and idle Stories, to persuade me to dishonesty; as if I were a Woman that would abuse so good a Husband, or violate the Rites of holy Wedlock.

*Love.* What have I done that you shou'd wonder at? Heav'n be prais'd, Madam, we live in an Age, when 'tis not look'd on as a Miracle, to see a Gentleman make love to a handsome Lady.

*Wife.* You thought, because I rally'd with you to-day, I might be wrought to any thing—no Sir, I am no such Woman, my noble Parents bred me virtuously; if my Father knew this, he'd make you repeat



pent this bold Attempt; but honest Women hate much Noise, I will not trouble him; you shall find, for all I am a Woman, I have Courage enough to revenge the Affront offer'd me my self—you have not done by me like a Gentleman, nor will I use you like one.

*Love.* Hold, hold, Madam.

*Dam.* Beat him soundly, Madam.

*Wife.* As you like this, Sir, you may come agen.

*Dam.* Look Madam, who are here!

*Wife.* My honourable Father.

*Sir Pet.* Yes Child, my Heart leaps for Joy at what I have heard; thy Wisdom and thy Courage show what Family thou cam'st of—let me embrace my Girl.

*L. Pri.* Come hither, Child, I cannot chuse but weep for Joy to see thee so like my self.

*Sir Pet.* Methinks, Son, you shou'd be extasy'd at what you have seen; I confess, you had reason to be alarm'd, but now all your Suspensions are remov'd.

*L. Pri.* Truly, Son, I think you ought to be the most contented of all Mankind.

*Dam.* Yes certainly Madam, he is but too happy in a Wife, he ought to kiss the very Ground she goes on.

*Brit.* Ah Traytress!

*Sir Pet.* What's that? why don't you thank your Wife for her Kindness?

*Wife.* No Sir, it needs not—he has no Obligation to me; what I did, was in Kindness to my self.

*L. Pri.* Whither art thou going, Child?

*Wife.* To my Chamber, Madam, that I may not be oblig'd to receive his unwilling Complement. [*Exit.*]

*Dam.* Truly Madam, she has reason to be angry; such a Wife as she is ought to be ador'd. [*Exit.*]

*Brit.* Hold your tongue, you damn'd demure Jade you.

*Sir Pet.* She cannot but resent your Unkindness to her; but now all will be well, your Fears are ended—Go, go, excuse your self, and be friends with her.

*L. Pri.* You ought to consider, she's a young Woman, Son, that has been virtuously bred, and not us'd to be suspected for such vile Actions; I am almost

D

ravish'd

50 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

ravish'd to see these Disorders at an end, by her discreet Management of this Business.

*Brit.* I see I might as well hold my tongue, for I am sure to get nothing by prating. I had as good sit down, and comfort my self with the old Hope, that when 'tis at the worst, it may mend—Come! who knows! the Time may happen—she'll be at it agen! the Devil may fail her if she trusts him too often—and if I shou'd show the Queen at last in her own Colours, she'd be damnably out of Countenance—Ah! dear Fortune! let me but live to prove my self a Cuckold, and I shall die contented.

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* My Lady presents her Service to you Madam, and commanded me to tell you the Viscount treats her with a Ball to-night, and she desires Sir *Peter*, your Ladyship, and Madam *Brittle* your Daughter to honour her with your Companies.

*L. Pri.* Pray return our humble Services to her, and let her know we will not fail to wait upon her Ladyship. Indeed, *Prudence*, my Lady *Laycock* is the best bred Gentlewoman in the whole City; she was always kind to her Relations; we have been often merry when my Brother Sir *Oliver* was alive—Come, Love, shall we be going?

Sir *Pet.* Ay my Lady.

[*Exeunt.*

*Manent Love and Pru.*

*Love.* Is she indeed related to your Lady?

*Pru.* Yes, indeed — Sir *Oliver Laycock* was her Brother.

*Love.* Was there ever such a Family of-Fops!

*Enter L. Laycock.*

*Pru.* Peace, here's my Lady!

*L. Lay.* Where have you left my Niece, Sir?

*Love.* I left her in the Garden with the Viscount—his Jealousy made him very pleasant, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Who is he jealous of?

*Love.* He's jealous of my Friend *Jack Cunningham*—shou'd he come hither now, I'm afraid he'd be the like of me.

*L. Lay.*

*L. Lay.* Perhaps he wou'd have more Occasion for't.

*Love.* What say you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* I find you can be very secret, Sir.

*Love.* In what, I beseech you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Be not so much surpriz'd; I saw it well enough before—but you know, Sir, our Sex does not permit us—

*Love.* Permit you to do what?

*L. Lay.* Well, they may talk what they please of Women; but when you Men resolve to dissemble a Passion, there's none of us come near you.

*Love.* What the Devil does she mean? perhaps she has discover'd the Intrigue I have with pretty Mrs.

*Brittle.* Why shou'd I disguise my Passion, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Indeed you have little reason for't, considering the Flame is honourable.

*Love.* I am at a loss agen — Good Madam, speak that I may understand you; I have no Flame, nor Fire, nor Smoke for any one — I am sure none that is very honourable.

*L. Lay.* Why Sir, do you not love me then?

*Love.* I love you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Yes, you Sir: have I found you?

*Love.* If one can love, and not know it himself, then Madam, I confess—

*L. Lay.* This is too much: but I was told before that no Man cou'd disguise his Thoughts more artfully than Mr. Lovemore can.

*Love.* Of whom had you this Secret, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Of one that knows your Thoughts, your Friend.

*Love.* Jack Cunningham?

*L. Lay.* The same; he told me too how generous you were that you resolv'd rather to pine and die, than to destroy his Hopes.

*Love.* Believe me, Madam, he abuses you.

*L. Lay.* Ay, ay, he told me you wou'd say so, Sir; but I—

*Love.* You laugh now, Madam, but if what I say be not a real Truth—

*L. Lay.* Had he not told me of your Love; this Obstinacy of yours wou'd have betray'd it—the very

52 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

Disorder you are in discovers it too plainly to have me doubt it now.

*Love.* Well, you may say your Pleasure, Madam, but a Curse on me if ever I lov'd you in my whole Life.

*L. Lay.* Not love me!

*Love.* No Madam, nor ever intend it; that's the Truth on't.

*L. Lay.* Shou'd a Stranger hear this, he'd think you very rude.

*Love.* What the Devil shall I do with her? she sticks like *Hercules's* Shirt. When *Cunningham* discover'd my Love to your Ladyship, did not you speak of Marriage to him, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Yes Sir; but he valu'd your Satisfaction too much to give his Consent to it.

*Love.* Nay, then my wonder ceases, and I forgive him freely for putting this trick upon me.

*L. Lay.* I hope he is not marry'd already, Sir.

*Love.* No Madam, but——

*L. Lay.* But what?

*Love.* I dare not tell it, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Let me beseech you, Sir.

*Love.* Shou'd he know it, he'd hate me for't.

*L. Lay.* Believe me Sir, he shall never know it for me.

*Love.* Well, I will trust you; the Truth is, he is your Nephew, Madam.

*L. Lay.* My Nephew, Sir?

*Love.* Your Brother that's at *Paris*, in his Youth fell in love with a Woman of Quality, one of the greatest Beauties in all *France*, she has been dead some Years, but her Name's well known; 'twas Madam *D'Olonne*——by her he had this Son that takes the Name of *Cunningham*.

*L. Lay.* 'Tis very strange; but do you not love me then?

*Love.* If I say I cannot, I hope Madam you will not think me rude for speaking Truth——but my Friend loves you to Distraction——and the Nearness of his Relation to you, makes him desperate——here he is, remember your Promise, Madam.

*Enter*



*Enter Cunningham.*

Had you no body to put your Tricks upon but me? farewel Sir; I hope I am even with you—Your Servant, Madam. *[Exit.*

*Cun.* What the Devil does he mean by this?

*L. Lay.* Truly Mr. *Cunningham*, 'twas not well done to abuse your Friend.

*Cun.* I did not abuse him; I told you he wou'd deny it, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Come, leave dissembling Sir; I know the Secret; and do forgive you too, provided you pardon your Friend for telling me.

*Cun.* What has he told you, Madam?

*L. Lay.* Let this stop your Mouth; you know Madam *D'Olonne*, Sir, do you not? O, does it startle you?

*Cun.* *Lovemore* has fitted me indeed; I know not what Story he has told her; and I cannot imagine what answer I shall give her.

*L. Lay.* My Brother need not be ashamed to own it; she was a handsome Lady, and you are a very hopeful Gentleman.

*Pru.* Is Mr. *Cunningham* your Brother's Son?

*L. Lay.* I might have guess'd it by my Brother's Letter, he writ so kindly of him — you are troubled, Sir, to think the Nearness of your Relation to me, shou'd take away your Hopes of marrying me.

*Cun.* This was wittily invented of the Rogue, and I'll pursue the Hint. *[Aside.*

Well, since he has discover'd me, I will confess it, Madam, and that I feign'd the Story of his Love to keep my self unknown.

*L. Lay.* That was unkindly done, but I forgive you, and am overjoy'd to know you are my Nephew; let me embrace you, Sir.

*Enter Philadelphia.*

*Phil.* How's this? Can my modest Aunt, that is so severe upon others, embrace a Man, and never blush at it?

*L. Lay.* Sure 'tis no scandal to embrace my Nephew.

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*Phil.* Is Mr. *Cunningham* your Nephew, Madam?

*Pru.* Yes forsooth, that he is.

*Phil.* If he be your Nephew, then he is my Cousin, and I ought to embrace him too, and bid him welcome.

*Cun.* My dearest Cousin.

*L. Lay.* Hold Sir, you embrace her very hard: why have you left the Company so soon?

*Phil.* Truly Madam; I follow'd your Instructions, and was afraid to be seen alone with two Men at the same time——you know what a censorious Age we live in.

*L. Lay.* Go get you to your Chamber; my Nephew must stay, for he has some Business with me.

*Phil.* Your Servant, Cousin.

*Cun.* I am yours, fair Cousin.

*Pru.* He's none of your Cousin.

*Phil.* I know it; *Lovemore* came laughing to me, and told me all. [Exit.]

*L. Lay.* Indeed you spoil her, Sir, with flattering her, and telling her she is fair.

*Cun.* Do you think she believes it, Madam?

*L. Lay.* So much, that she is grown conceited of her Beauty, which is so provoking, I can scarce endure her.

*Cun.* What a foolish Thing a Maid at fifteen is.

*L. Lay.* Fifteen! I assure you, Sir, she's nearer twenty.

*Pru.* How gracefully she steals from her own Age, and adds it to her Niece's?

*L. Pru.* You are melancholly, Sir; my Heart's too tender—longer to see you languish——Comfort your self, dear Sir.

*Cun.* Comfort my self with what?

*L. Lay.* The truth is, this pretended Brother, Sir—

*Cun.* Ha! She makes me tremble.

*L. Lay.* Is not indeed, my Brother.

*Cun.* 'Sdeath, I am undone.

*Pru.* Is not the *English* Gentleman that has liv'd so long in *France*, your Brother, Madam? you always call'd him so.

*L. Lay.*

## The WANTON WIFE.

55

*L. Lay.* I did so, *Prue*—but when his Father marry'd my Mother; she was a Widow, and he a Widower—she had me by her first Husband, and his Father had him by his first Wife—We were bred up together, and thence we ever call'd Brother and Sister.

*Cun.* Prudence, what shall I do?

*Enter Jeffery:*

*Jeff.* Sir, your Attorney sends you Word, that if order be not speedily taken, you will be nonsuited.

*Cun.* No matter, I have greater Grievs upon me.

*L. Lay.* Dear Sir, oblige your Friend, and let me know 'em.

*Cun.* Ah Madam, my Torment is, that Fate, cruel Fate, will not consent that I shou'd be your Husband.

*L. Lay.* No Sir, lay not the blame on Fate—Confess the Truth, and say you do not love me.

*Cun.* Not love you, Madam! *Jeffery* can tell how often he has heard me sigh for you.

*Jeff.* Oh a thousand times a day, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Why then will you not marry me? tell me your Reason.

*Cun.* I cannot, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Why?

*Cun.* Shame will not let me.

*L. Lay.* Let it be Shame, or what it will; either tell me, or never see my Face more.

*Cun.* Now you are too cruel, Madam—Sirrah, invent something to bring me off.

*Jeff.* I, Sir! alas what is it I shou'd invent?

*Cun.* Dear Madam, spare my Blushes, and let *Love-more* tell it for me—if he refuses to discover it, I'll take the Confidence to tell it my self; and leave you, that I may the better do so. [Exit.]

*L. Lay.* This Man amazes me. Thou know'st this Business, *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* My Master has begun a Lye, and I'll continue it, if I can—No Madam, not half so well as Mr. *Love-more* does.

*L. Lay.* They are Friends; I shall never get the Truth from him—but thou may'st tell me, *Jeffery*.

56. *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Jeff.* Yes, and be beaten for't; and then you'll laugh at me.

*Pru.* My Lady will undertake for that.

*Jeff.* Well, Madam; if you'll make my Peace for me.

*L. Lay.* Upon my Word, I will.

*Jeff.* Pray mark me, Madam—my Master was affronted by a Gentleman, who fled into *Yorkshire* for fear of being call'd to an Account for't——thither my Master followed, and to prevent discovery chang'd his Name, we call'd him *Monsieur Bouteville*.—In a few days he was so fortunate (or rather so unfortunate) to meet this Enemy; they fought, my Master was wounded, and his Enemy left dead upon the Place—we (to avoid the Search that was made for us) fled for Sanctuary to a Viscount's Castle.

*L. Lay.* Prithee, go on.

*Jeff.* The Viscount was gone a Journey, but his Sister, who commanded in his Absence, very kindly received my Master—with this Lady he convers'd daily, sometimes they met at Nights too.—In fine, my Master play'd the Fool, for the young Lady was got with Child; by whom, it was no matter.

*L. Lay.* You said 'twas by your Master.

*Jeff.* The truth is, I think he did not hinder it—well, my Master grew jealous of her, and watching one Night, caught a Servant in Bed with her: Enrag'd at this, he stole away privately, and took no leave of any one—soon after the Lady's Brother returned, the Viscount *Sans-Terre*.

*Pru.* The Viscount *Sans-Terre*!—he is here in the House, *Jeffery*.

*Jeff.* Then my poor Master is lost—be judge your self, Madam, if he dares marry, or trust any one with so important a Secret, when this *Sans-Terre* has sworn *Bouteville* shall die a thousand Deaths; hanging him at his Castle-Gate, is the least that will appease his Fury.

*L. Lay.* At first, I must confess, I was very angry with him for dishonouring a Maid of her Quality—but when I consider'd she receiv'd two Gallants at a time,



time, she deserv'd to be forsaken by Mankind ; well, I'll try to make 'em Friends.

*Jeff.* You'll lose your Time, Madam, for this furious Viscount never changes his Resolution.

*Enter Merryman.*

*L. Lay.* Here he is, I'll try what I can do with him.

*Jeff.* You had best, Madam, speak with my Master first.

*L. Lay.* Trust me, I'll say nothing shall injure him.

*Jeff.* He'll destroy all I have done ; he knows nothing of this, and 'tis impossible to instruct him here.

*L. Lay.* You are welcome, Sir—I have heard that Men in love are very tender-hearted——do you find your self so, my Lord ?

*Mer.* Why do you ask ?

*L. Lay.* Because I mean to make a Trial of it.

*Jeff.* Have a care what you say—*Bouteville* hang'd for defaming your Sister.

*Mer.* Enough—now my fair Widow, what wou'd you have me do ?

*L. Lay.* There is one Monsieur *Bouteville*—

*Mer.* Yes, Lady, he was hang'd for—

*Prn.* He deserved it, my Lord, for affronting a Man of your Quality.

*Mer.* Ah Madam, had you seen the Rascal swing !

*Prn.* Woe be to him, if ever your Lordship takes him.

*Mer.* That's right—— if ever I catch the Villain, he shall swing, he shall swing like a Boy at a Bell-rope.

*L. Lay.* Nay, I beseech your Lordship.

*Mer.* Pray Madam, give me leave——shall I suffer an insolent hectoring Fellow to call my Sister Whore ?

*Prn.* Nay, worse, my Lord, to make a Whore of her.

*Mer.* That's right agen ! make my Sister a Whore ; I'll hang the Rogue for it at *Tyburn*.

*Prn.* I fear your Power does not extend so far, but if your Lordship had him at your Castle in the North—

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*Mer.* True, if I catch him there, I'll hang the Whore-master at my Castle-Gate.

*Jeff.* This impudent dull Rogue will ruin all.

*Mer.* What damn'd Story has the Rascal told her? If ever I find him, though there be no more *Bontevilles* of the Family, I'll rip his Heart up—nay, never stare so; I will do't, Madam.

*L. Lay.* Nay, now my Lord you are too furious.

*Mer.* Infamous Woman! I never think of her, but she makes me faint—hold me, Friend; or I shall swoon—tell me in my Ear what I must do.

*L. Lay.* Run, *Prue*, and fetch some *Mirabilis* from my Closet.

*Mer.* Let her stay, Madam, I shall quickly be well agen.

*Prue.* I see Men that are nobly born, resent such Injuries much worse than meaner Persons.

*L. Lay.* All young Wenches are troublesome Creatures, *Prue*.

*Prue.* True Madam! and the sooner you dispose of your Niece, 'twill be the better, Madam.

*L. Lay.* No haste there, *Prue*, I'll marry my self first.

*Mer.* So! now I understand you perfectly—Pardon, dear Madam, this Disorder in me; Grief for my Sister's Shame, took away my Speech.

*L. Lay.* Let me have the Honour to accommodate this Business; pray my Lord, let me.

*Mer.* How Madam, do you think that I can forgive a Fellow that came like a Thief into my House, and robbed my Sister of her Honour; a Sister that was the very Cream, nay, the Sister of Sisters; and when he had done her Business, to turn his Bum upon her——no, I'll cut his Throat, tho' there be no more *Bontevilles* in the Nation.

*L. Lay.* You have told me, Sir, you love me; now I'll try it—give me this Gentleman's Life, and I'll believe you.

*Mer.* Who the Devil in half a Day's Time could give you an account of his Birth, and his Country?

*L. Lay.* That's all one; sign his Pardon, my Lord, and then you shall know all.

*Mer.*

*Mer.* Well, if you will contract your self before good Witness to marry the Viscount *Sans-Terre*, whenever I call for you, I'll pardon him — without this, Widow, I'll agree to nothing.

*L. Lay.* You ask too little for so great a Favour — I will do more, my Lord, for you; my Niece is young and rich, you shall have her; I give her to you, Sir.

*Mer.* And I return her to you agen; no, I'll have none of her; I love my Honour better.

*L. Lov.* My Niece, my Lord, is vertuous; she has been strictly bred, and does not live as wanton Women do.

*Mer.* That's all one to me — 'tis you I have a mind to.

*L. Lay.* What, if I do not love your Lordship?

*Mer.* And what if I do not love your wanton Niece?

*L. Lay.* You shall have 10000*l.* with her immediately, and all I have beside when I am dead.

*Mer.* Your Servant, Lady *Laycock* — there's no catching old Birds with Chaff.

*L. Lay.* Since you are so provoking, I must tell you whatever your Birth is, you have not been bred like a Gentleman.

*Mer.* How ridiculous 'tis to see a Woman so very pert at fifty!

*L. Lay.* Fifty! away, rude Man.

*Prue.* You are very uncivil, my Lord, to say so; I assure you my Lady is not thirty.

*Jeff.* Let them alone — they'll fall to downright scolding presently.

*Mer.* You hope to get an old Gown by flattering her — or else you are bribed by *Cunningham* to speak for him, and fain would fob me off with the gigling Niece — Somebody shall pay for this Affront — *Banterville* lurks hereabout; I shall find the Rascal, I'll be the death of him.

*L. Lay.* Ah *Prue*? what shall I do to avoid this dreadful Storm?

*Prue.* You are in danger now to lose them both.

*L. Lay.* Poor *Cunningham*, unfortunate every way.

60 *The AMOROUS WIDOW : or,*

*Pro.* Should he leave the House in this Passion, Madam, Heaven knows what Mischief he may do—he's going, I'll stop him if I can—My Lord, the Company you invited to a Ball are coming in; though your Lordship is angry with my Lady, I beseech you be not rude to them.

*Mer.* Well, I'll suppress my Fury for a while—but when the Ball is done, woe be to somebody.

*Enter Sir Peter, L. Pride, Cunningham, Lovemore, Philadelphia, Wife, Damaris, and Clodpole.*

Ladies and Gentlemen you are welcome, pray seat your selves; let the Fiddles strike up, and begin the Ball.

*Enter Brittle.*

*Brit.* O Torment! my House is made a meer Musick-Booth—come, Mistress, you have frisk'd enough, 'tis time for modest Wives to be in Bed.

*Wife.* I will not fail to come when he's asleep.

*L. Pri.* 'Tis late, we'll take our leaves of your Ladyship.

*Sir Pet.* Your Servant, Gentlemen— Ladies, Ikiss your Hands.

*L. Lay.* Nay, you must stay a while, and take part of a little Banquet— pray my Lord, do me the Favour to lead my Sister—Come, Gentlemen.

*Mer.* Hold there; I will not part with you; I have two Hands, and can lead you both.

4 AP 54

*The End of the Fourth Act.*

ACT





ACT V. SCENE I.

Cunningham, Philadelphia, Jeffery.

*Phil.* **B**UT are we safe here, *Jeffery*?  
*Jeff.* Never doubt it, Madam—Mr. *Brittle* and his Wife are gone to Bed, and your Aunt's at the farther End of the House in her own Lodgings, busy with the Viscount, trust me, you are secure.

*Phil.* Now I must chide you, to put a false Viscount on my Aunt, Sir, was too much.

*Cun.* Alas, Madam, I had no other way to free my self from the Trick you put upon me, when you told her I was in love with her; and I was beholden to *Tom Lovemore* for contriving it.

*Phil.* 'Tis very pleasant to hear *Prudence* persuade her——'twas the generoufist Thing that ever Woman did to marry this Viscount, and preserve your Life—she seems inclined to it, but——what do you think she will do, when she discovers she is cheated by you?

*Cun.* She shall not be cheated Madam; just now I received a Letter from the true Viscount——she cannot dislike his Person, for he's a handsome, honest, pleasant Gentleman, and will be here in two days at farthest.

*Phil.* But are you sure the Viscount will like her?

*Cun.* She is rich, and he is much in Debt; if he finds Money, he'll dispense with her Age and Beauty, Madam: He promises, whatever I engage for him he'll stand to——

*Phil.* What noise is that?

*Enter Lovemore, Merryman, Boy with Flambeau.*  
*Love.* Nay, I beseech your Lordship.

*Mer.*

62 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Mer.* Never tell me, Sir, I'll not stay to be affronted thus—do you think I'll suffer an old ill-bred Woman to capitulate with a Man of my Quality—no, I'll be the Death of that Son of a Whore *Bouteville*—Sirrah, go on.

*Boy.* To your Lodging, my Lord?

*Mer.* No, light me to the Devil.

[*Exit.*

*Cun.* What's the matter, *Tom*?

*Lov.* The Business is quite off agen.

*Phil.* That's very unlucky—what occasion'd it?

*Lov.* Madam, when our Viscount swore he had hir'd Villains to murder *Bouteville*, if he refus'd to marry his Sister, *Prudence* and I at last persuaded her to give herself to this furious Lord—rather than endanger your sweet Life.

*Cun.* I thank you, Sir.

*Lov.* But when he declar'd his Jealousy of you, and told her 'twas not enough to marry him to herself, unless she gave her Niece to Mr. *Cunningham*, she fell into a Passion, vowing she wou'd not be impos'd upon—this broke the Treaty off, and made the angry Lord fly away in a huff.

*Phil.* Peace, who comes here!

*Enter Prudence.*

*Pru.* Where are you, Mr. *Cunningham*?

*Cun.* *Prudence*!

*Pru.* Yes Sir, is *Philadelphia* there?

*Phil.* I am. What's the News, *Prudence*?

*Pru.* Ah, Madam, can you hear it patiently?

*Phil.* Yes, let me know the worst.

*Pru.* I have not the heart to tell it you.

*Lov.* Out with it, Woman.

*Pru.* Oh 'tis too dreadful, Sir—your Aunt has no way to appease the Viscount's Fury, but by marrying him herself, and giving you, Madam, to Mr. *Cunningham*—at last she consented to it—what say you? are you able to endure this Thunder-clap?

*Phil.* Beshrew your Heart, you frighted me extremely.

*Lov.* There's but one way to take away this Fright.

*Pru.* What's that?

*Lov.*

*Lov.* The sight of a little *Levite* that has taken Orders, recovers 'em I warrant you.

*Pru.* That Care is taken—I do not do my Business, Sir, by halves.

*Cun.* I am so extasy'd with what I hear, it takes away my Speech.

*Pru.* Pray Mrs. Bride that must be, go to your Chamber, and stay there till you are call'd for—shou'd your Aunt have the least Suspicion of you, all were undone.

*Phil.* That's true—your Servant Gentlemen. [*Ex.*]

*Cun.* Oh *Prudence*! how am I oblig'd to thee?

*Pru.* Did not I tell you, Time and Resolution wou'd overcome all Difficulties—I love plain-dealing, Sir, and hate to hear some Women always talking of Virtue, and preaching against that Love that they make themselves in private—hang all Hypocrisy, I say—I hear my Lady; fall to your Complaints, Sir.

*Cun.* Must I lose her then—and can I outlive the Thought on't?

*Pru.* Good, Sir, be not so much afflicted.

*Enter Lady Laycock.*

*Cun.* How! not afflicted, *Prudence*? shall she sacrifice herself to preserve me, and ought not I—

*L. Lay.* Yes, Mr. *Cunningham*, rather than hazard your Life, I have consented to marry him I hate—ah, Sir, though the Lady was beautiful, you shou'd have been more discreet than to have given way to such unlawful Love.

*Cun.* Alas, Madam, there was no body but an old Aunt, almost bed-ridden, to look after this young fair Lady—she was kind, and I was not Marble, Madam, and had I not surpriz'd that Fellow with her, I had marry'd her, I so tenderly lov'd her; but now I'll die a thousand Deaths before I consent to it.

*L. Lay.* Perhaps a good round Sum of Money, Sir, will end this Business—you know he is poor.

*Cun.* I offer'd to beggar myself to do it; but nothing but marrying her will satisfy him.

*L. Lay.* Since cruel Heav'n will not consent that I shall be your Wife, 'twill be some Pleasure to have you ally'd

64 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

ally'd to me; you shall marry my Niece, if you can like her, Sir.

*Enter Clodpole.*

*Clod.* Sir, *Damaris* bid me tell you, if you can get away the Company, her Mistress will come hither to you instantly.

*Cun.* If I must be depriv'd of you, I cannot think of another, Madam.

*Lov.* Nay Friend, you are too obstinate—the Viscount, Madam, is at the *Devil-Tavern*—if you please to retire into your Chamber, I'll go to him, and try what I can work him to; I am impatient till I see the End of this Business, Madam.

*L. Lay.* We both, Sir, are oblig'd to you—will you bear me Company till your Friend returns?

*Cun.* I'll wait upon you, Madam.

[*Ex.*

*Clod.* Is not the Night very unkind to be so dark, Sir?

*Lov.* Quite contrary, it hinders me, *Clodpole*, from being seen.

*Clod.* That's right; but how comes it to be so dark?

*Lov.* Thou art very inquisitive.

*Clod.* If I had been a Scholar, I should have thought of things, that never had been thought on, Sir, before.

*Lov.* I believe so—for thou talk'st so like a Philosopher—Is *Damaris* very kind to thee?

*Clod.* I am, Sir—

*Lov.* Hush, I hear 'em coming, *Clodpole*.

*Enter Wife, Damaris.*

*Wife.* *Damaris*!

*Dam.* Madam.

*Wife.* Leave the Door half open.

*Dam.* I have so, Madam.

*Lov.* Where are you, my fair Mistress?

*Wife.* Here, Mr. Lovemore.

*Lov.* Let me kiss this pretty Hand of yours.

*Wife.* Now we are safe, my Husband is asleep, Sir.

*Lov.* Let us retire into the next Porch, Madam, there we shall have more Convenience.

*Wife.* Lead me, Sir; come, *Damaris*.

[*Ex.*

*Clod.* *Damaris*, where art thou *Damaris*?

*Enter*



*Enter Brittle.*

*Brit.* I heard my Wife steal softly down Stairs, and got my Clothes on, as fast as I could, and follow'd her; where can the Baggage be?

*Clod.* Why *Damaris*, I say; O, art thou there? thy Mistress says her Husband's very safe, he snores like any Devil; he little thinks his Wife and Mr. *Lovemore* are together now; I'd give a Crown to hear what the Cuckold dreams of—certainly 'twould be worth laughing at; for my part I think my Master does him too much honour, and he's an impudent Fellow, to desire to keep her only to himself—why dost thou not speak to me, *Damaris*?—let's follow 'em, and give me thy pretty little Fift, that I may kiss it—ah how sweet it is? methinks I am eating Sugar-Plumbs—oh fye, what dost thou mean by that? I do not take this for a Favour.

*Brit.* Who's there?

*Clod.* No body, Sir, no body. [Exit.]

*Brit.* He's gone; but has inform'd me whom my treacherous Wife is with—once more I'll send for her Parents, I hope I shall convince 'em now, and get their Consents to be divorc'd from her—ho, *Jeremy*, *Jeremy*!

*Enter Jeremy above.*

*Fer.* Did you call, Sir?

*Brit.* Yes, come down quickly.

*Fer.* Here I am, Sir, I don't know who cou'd come quicker.

*Brit.* O, are you there?

*Fer.* Yes, Sir.

*Brit.* Hift! speak softly—look you, go to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and tell 'em I desire they'd come hither instantly—d'ye hear, *Jeremy*—*Jeremy*!

*Fer.* Sir.

*Brit.* Why, where are you, Sir?

*Fer.* Here, Sir.

*Brit.* Here, Sir, why where the Devil's that, Sir?

*Fer.* Here, here, Sir.

*Brit.* Oh that's well—I say go immediately to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and give 'em my humble Service,

66 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

Service, and tell 'em that something has happen'd, d'ye hear, and desire 'em to come hither immediately—— ha! why don't you answer, Sirrah. *Jeremy!* why, what is the Devil run away with him——*Jeremy!*

*Fer.* Here, Sir!

*Brit.* Here you Rascal, if I come to you, I'll—— oh damn'd Rogue! he has murder'd me! Sirrah, come hither, or I'll beat you to death.

*Fer.* Ay, but won't you beat me if I do?

*Brit.* Come hither, I tell you.

*Fer.* Um, but you will beat me, if I do.

*Brit.* Come hither, I tell you——oh this provoking Dog! I tell you I won't beat you, Booby.

*Fer.* Ah! won't you indeed.

*Brit.* I won't indeed——A senseless Cur! come nearer——Go to my Father and Mother-in-Law, and pray 'em to come hither instantly; tell 'em 'tis a Business of the greatest Importance to me in the world——if you find 'em unwilling, desire 'em to come this once, and I'll never trouble 'em more, d'ye hear.

*Fer.* Yes Sir, I am gone.

[Exit.]

*Enter Lovemore, Wife, Damaris, Clodpole.*

*Brit.* Who comes here? oh 'tis my Wife, and her Gallant. I'll make use of the Darkness of the Night, and hear what 'tis they say.

*Wife.* I must be gone, my Husband may wake, and miss me.

*Lov.* Will you leave me so soon?

*Wife.* We have had Discourse enough for the first time.

*Lov.* I have not told you half I had to say.

*Wife.* Farewel, another time you shall tell me.

*Lov.* When I consider you leave me to go to your Husband, it distracts me—the Privilege a Husband has is Death to any Lover, Madam.

*Wife.* Are you so weak to be disturb'd at that? Do you think all Women love their Husbands, Sir? We often depend on Parents, who mind nothing but Wealth; they force us to obey 'em, and marry whom they please, not whom we love; but commonly we are even with 'em, and use 'em as they deserve.

*Brit.*

*The WANTON WIFE.* 67

*Brit.* Ah poor Husbands, what Devils do we take into our Bosoms?

*Lov.* He is not worthy to be your Husband, Madam, 'twas Cruelty to marry you to so mean a Person—Heaven never meant you for a Citizen's Wife.

*Brit.* If Heaven had made her thine thou woud'st change thy Note—I have heard enough, I'll in. [Ex.]

*Dam.* If you have any more to say of your Husband, Madam, dispatch, for 'tis late.

*Lov.* Now thou art cruel, *Damaris*.

*Wife.* I must be gone, farewell, Sir.

*Lov.* Since you will have it so, I must obey; but I beseech you, Madam, consider what Torments I endure, that I must leave you.

*Clod.* Where art thou, *Damaris*?

*Dam.* I am here; farewell.

*Lov.* I'll now go to my Viscount at the Tavern, follow me, *Clodpole*. [Ex.]

*Wife.* Are they gone, *Damaris*?

*Dam.* Yes, Madam.

*Wife.* Let us go in again, and make no Noise.

*Dam.* Oh Heavens! what shall we do? the Door's lock'd, Madam.

*Wife.* Lock'd! call *Jeremy* to open it—call him softly.

*Dam.* *Jeremy*! *Jeremy*!

*Enter Brittle above.*

*Brit.* *Jeremy*, *Jeremy*! have I caught you, my fine Lady Wife? I am glad to see you abroad at this time of the Night, Madam.

*Wife.* What hurt is it to take the fresh Air of the Evening?

*Brit.* Alas, none in the World, 'tis the properest Time you cou'd have chosen; to take the Air! no, 'twas rather to take a Heat, you Witch you; I know your whole Plot, Gentlewoman; I heard how sweetly you and your impudent Gallant sang out my Praises; but 'tis my Comfort now I shall be reveng'd—I shall now convince your Father and Mother that my Complaints were just; now they shall see what a disorderly Life you lead; they'll be here presently.

*Wife.* What shall we do now, *Damaris*?

*Brit.*

68 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: or,*

*Brit.* A ha! is your Prompter to Wickedness struck dumb? This was an Accident you did not look for; I triumph, Madam, now; now I shall bring down your Pride, and destroy all your little Artifices—hitherto you manag'd your Roguery so cunningly, nothing that I could say would be believ'd—but now, thanks to my Stars, all your Plots will be laid open to your lasting Shame.

*Wife.* Pray Husband let the Door be open'd for me.

*Brit.* No, you shall stay there till your Parents come—they shall see what Hours you keep; in the mean time think of some Trick to deliver you from this damnable Adventure—make 'em, if you can, believe I wrong you still; that this Nocturnal Pilgrimage was but a Sally to a Neighbour's Labour, or so.

*Wife.* No indeed, Husband, I'll disguise nothing from you; I'll not defend myself, or deny any thing.

*Brit.* 'Tis because you have no hope to invent any thing that will be now believ'd.

*Wife.* I confess I am to blame, you have cause to be angry with me; but I beseech you do not expose me to my Parents Fury.

*Brit.* I kiss your Hands, fair Madam.

*Wife.* Dear Husband, I beseech you.

*Brit.* Now you are caught I am your dear Husband, am I? you never us'd such kind Words to me before.

*Wife.* Trust me, I'll never give you cause to complain of me agen.

*Brit.* You'd as good say nothing. Farewel.

*Wife.* Pray stay, hear me but one Word before you go.

*Brit.* Well, what have you to say?

*Wife.* I confess I have been to blame; that all your Complaints were just; I watch'd till you were asleep to meet that Gentleman you spoke of—but sure you may pardon little Failings in one so young as I am—one that has scarce seen any thing of the World; that may fall into Frailty, and yet think no harm.

*Brit.* In good time; 'twou'd be a notable proof of my Charity indeed, should I believe you.

*Wife.* I do not say I am altogether guiltless, I only pray you to forget a Fault I heartily repent of, and

ask



ask your Pardon for; if you grant me this, you'll gain more upon me than all my Parents Anger—or the Bonds of Marriage can ever have Pow'r to do.—In a word, it shall make me renounce all Company and Courtship—nay, you shall find me the most obedient Wife in the whole World—I protest, Dear, 'tis you, and only you I love.

*Brit.* Ah! wheedling Crocodile!

*Wife.* Will you not believe me then?

*Brit.* No.

*Wife.* Sweet Husband, be so good-natur'd to me.

*Brit.* No.

*Wife.* Let me entreat you.

*Brit.* No!

*Wife.* As you love Heaven.

*Brit.* No, I'll have the World see what you are.

*Wife.* If you make me desperate; know, a Woman in that Condition is capable of doing any thing.

*Brit.* What will your sweet Ladyship do?

*Wife.* That which you may repent of—I'll kill myself with this Knife, if you deny me.

*Brit.* Very good.

*Wife.* 'Twill not be so good as you imagine, neither; every one knows how ill we have liv'd together—when I am dead, no one will doubt but that you were my Murderer—my Parents will never let my Death go unreveng'd—they will pursue you with all Severity that Law or Friends will suffer 'em. Consider of it; I am not the first Wife, that has kill'd her self to be reveng'd of a cruel hard-hearted Husband.

*Brit.* O your Servant—killing one's self has been long out of fashion, Madam.

*Wife.* Assure yourself I'll do it, if you persist in your Refusal, and do not open the Door to me immediately.

*Brit.* Adad, I'll trust you; I shall not be frighted with this Trick.

*Wife.* If you 'scape the Law, my Ghost shall haunt you for't.

*Brit.* Ah! if I were but rid of your Person now, I should not much fear your Ghost hereafter.

*Wife.* I am just doing it.

*Brit.*

70 *The AMOROUS WIDOW: Or,*

*Brit.* It may be so; but yet methinks, you are very long about it.

*Dam.* Hold, Madam, you cannot be in earnest.

*Brit.* No, no, I warrant her.

*Wife.* Stand off; I'll kill thee else—there.

*Dam.* Ah, she has done't; she has done't.

*Wife.* So, now you find too late I did not jest; you can witness, *Damaris*, who was my Murderer; commend me to my Parents, tell 'em, my last Request is, that they will see my Death reveng'd upon my cruel Husband.

*Dam.* She's gone, she's gone; O jealous Monster to murder so sweet a Creature—I'll to her Father and Mother instantly, my Witness will be enough to hang you—you were the Cause of her Death, and I may with a safe Conscience swear 'twas you that did it.

*Brit.* All's very still—Is it possible she can be so malicious to kill herself only to have me hang'd? I'll light a Candle and come down immediately. [Ex.

*Wife. Damaris!*

*Dam.* Madam.

*Wife.* Come hither, and stand up close here by me.

*Enter Brittle with a Light, they go in.*

*Brit.* Can a Woman's Wickedness extend so far to murder herself, to damn her Soul, only to be reveng'd of me—ha! here's no body, I might have believ'd this, at first: when the cunning Quean found neither Prayers, nor Threats wou'd work upon me, she ran away; better and better still—this will convince her Parents with a vengeance and render her odious to the whole World—ha! how the duce came this Door lock'd!—open the Door there quickly.

*Enter Wife and Damaris above.*

*Wife.* Away you drunken Sot; get you to the Tavern from whence you came, is this an Hour to come home in, is this a Life for an honest Man to lead?

*Brit.* How's this? have you—

*Wife.* Go, go, base Man, I am weary on't. I'll endure it no longer, I'll complain to my Father and Mother on't.

*Brit.* Have you the Impudence to say all this to my very Face?

*Enter*

*Enter Jeremy, Sir Peter, Lady Pride under an Umbrella.*

*Wife.* I beseech you Sir, and you dear Madam, to come hither, and do me Justice on a Husband whom Jealousy and Wine have quite distracted; he neither knows what he does, nor what he says—he has sent for you himself to witness the greatest Piece of Extravagance that ever yet was heard of——there he stands, just now come from the Tavern, Madam; how many Nights do I sit up for him?

*Brit.* Was there ever such a Devil?

*Wife.* If you hearken to him he'll tell you he's the most injur'd man in the whole City; that whilst he slept, I stole away from him to meet a Gentleman, and a thousand other idle Stories of the same Nature, Sir.

*Dam.* Yes Madam, he wou'd fain have made us believe that he was in the House, and we abroad——this Folly he's so strangely possess'd with, you can hardly now beat it out of his Head.

*L. Pri.* 'Tis the strangest Impudence in the whole World, to call us out of our Beds at this Time of the Night.

*Brit.* I must confess I never saw so much Impudence before.

*Sir Pet.* What is your meaning, Son, to use me thus?

*Wife.* Oh my dear Father, I am weary of my Life, and can no longer endure such a wicked Husband; my Patience is tired, he has said a thousand injurious Things to me besides.

*Sir Pet.* Troth, Son, you are a very unworthy Fellow; do not anger me any more, I say do not.

*Dam.* Truly, Sir, 'tis a shame to see a pretty Gentlewoman us'd thus—all the Neighbours take notice on't; nay, it calls to Heaven for Vengeance on him.

*Brit.* Can I endure all this? pray, Sir, hear me but two Words.

*Wife.* Pray hear him, Sir.

*Dam.* He has drunk so much, no body can endure him. Methinks I smell him hither.

*Brit.* I shall run mad—Father-in-Law I conjure you—

*Sir Pet.* Stand farther off—you smell of Wine intolerably.

*Brit.* Madam, shall I entreat you?

*L. Pri.* Out upon him, his Breath's infectious——'tis enough to give one the griping of the Guts.

*Brit.*

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*Brit.* Let me but tell you only——

*Sir Pet.* Keep farther off, I say, I can't endure you.

*Brit.* Pray, Madam, give me leave——

*L. Pri.* Away, away, your Breath, Son, turns my Stomach.

*Brit.* Well then, if you'll hear me I'll stand farther off——I swear to you I have not been out of my House to-night, nor three Minutes out of my Bed; 'twas she that was abroad.

*Wife.* Now, Madam, did not I tell you he'd say this before?

*Dam.* You see what likelihood there is of this?

*Brit.* I call all the Stars to witness I was in my House, and that——

*L. Pri.* Hold your tongue, your Folly's insupportable.

*Brit.* May I be thunderstruck immediately, if I was out of my House.

*Sir Pet.* Come, trouble us no more, but ask her Pardon.

*Brit.* I ask her Pardon!

*L. Pri.* Yes you, and presently too, you were best.

*Brit.* What! she offends, and I must ask Pardon?

*Sir Pet.* Do not expostulate with me, lest you repent it.

*Brit.* Oh *Barnaby Brittle*, what hast thou brought thy self to!

*L. Pri.* Daughter, come down.

*Sir Pet.* Make haste, that your Husband may ask your Pardon before we go.

*L. Pri.* I'll pull down your stubborn Heart; I'll teach you what it is to abuse a Gentlewoman so. [Ex.

*Enter Wife, Damaris.*

*Come Clown, and ask your Wife forgiveness, quickly.*

*Wife.* Shall I forgive him, Madam; no, 'tis impossible, I desire to be divorc'd from him.

*Sir Pet.* Daughter, such Separations are scandalous; tho' he's so foolish to desire it, yet you ought to be wiser, Child——have Patience, and try him once again.

*Wife.* After so many Affronts, can I endure him longer?

*Sir Pet.* You must, I command you do it.

*Wife.* That stops my Mouth, your Power is absolute.

*Dam.* Sweet-natur'd Creature!

*Wife.*



*Wife.* You see, all that he does is by Constraint—  
but whatever Force I use upon myself, I am resolv'd,  
I will obey you, Sir——

*Dam.* Innocent Lamb!

*Sir Pet.* Come Sir——

*Wife.* All you can do is to no purpose, Sir, to-morrow  
he'll do the same again.

*Sir Pet.* I'll take care of that—come Son, kneel down.

*Brit.* How! kneel?

*Sir Pet.* Yes kneel, and quickly too.

*Brit.* O Torment!—what must I say?

*Sir Pet.* Madam, I beg your Pardon.

*Brit.* How! Madam.

*L. Pri.* Yes Madam; is she not a Gentlewoman?

*Brit.* Then Madam, I beg your Pardon.

*Sir Pet.* For the Folly I committed.

*Brit.* For the Folly I committed—in marrying you.

*Sir Pet.* I promise you hereafter I'll lead a better Life.

*Brit.* I promise you hereafter I'll lead a better Life.

*Wife.* Well Husband, do so then, and I freely pardon  
your past Fault.

*Sir Pet.* Take notice this is the last time we'll en-  
dure your Impertinence.

*L. Pri.* If you return to your Folly, you shall be  
taught your Duty to such a Wife, and what respect  
you ought to pay to the Quality of her Parents.

*Wife.* Come, Dear, give me your Hand we will be  
Friends.

*Dam.* O Miracle of Goodness!

*Wife.* 'Twill be to no purpose for you to run wild  
again; if you do, in time I shall make you tame.

*Brit.* Well, I must endure it then—or if I will be  
free, I must either hang or drown myself.

*Enter Cunningham, Lady Laycock, Prudence.*

*L. Pri.* Look, if the Noise you made has not brought  
down my Sister *Laycock*—I fear we have disturb'd  
your Ladyship.

*L. Lay.* What's the matter?

*L. Pri.* Here has been a little Difference between my  
Daughter and her Husband; but thanks to Heaven,  
Madam, now all's well.

74 *The AMOROUS WIDOW : or,*

*Enter Merryman, Lovemore, Clodpole, Jeffery.*

*Lov.* With much importunity, Madam, I have brought my Lord again.

*Mer.* Yes Madam, I am come once more to end this foolish Business; do you consent to what I last propos'd.

*L. Lay.* Yes, Sir, you shall have all you desir'd of me.

*Mer.* O, are You there! you thought to have snapt her, did you?

*Cun.* I confess, my Lord, I love her——nor shou'd you make such an easy Conquest, did she not bind my Hands.

*Mer.* What the Devil ails you? are you not pleas'd that I make you my Nephew, Sir?

*Cun.* No, my Lord, when you take from me all I love.

*L. Lay.* Why will you not marry her, my Lord, and leave me to Mr. *Cunningham*?——you see what a Passion he has for me.

*Mer.* And don't I shew a greater Passion for you? who have been offer'd so many thousand Pounds to be Friends with *Bouteville*——yet at your Request I do it *gratis*.

*L. Lay.* May I not justly doubt you, when you told me to my face I was both old and ugly.

*Mer.* I did but jest when I said so——you shall call me what you please; and when I am merry I must have leave to say any thing to you——go, *Prudence*, get my Niece.

*L. Lay.* Well, Mr. *Cunningham*, since there's no Remedy, for my sake marry her.

*Lov.* Nay *Jack*, you must consent, since my Lady desires it of you.

*Cun.* How if your Niece, Madam, will not consent to it?

*L. Lay.* I'll answer for her——she dares not refuse when I command her.

*Enter Philadelphia and Prudence.*

*Mer.* Come hither, my pert Niece, and let me see how obedient you can be to your Aunt.

*L. Lay.* My Lord has taken care to provide a Husband for you.

*Mer.* Yes, my pretty little smirking Rogue——come make me a Curt'sey for't, and give me Thanks.

*Phil.*

*Phil.* I am too young to marry yet, my Lord.

*Pru.* You'll make your Aunt angry with you—give him your Hand, since she'll have it so.

*L. Lay.* Foolish Girl, not to know when she's well.

*Phil.* Well Sir, I give you my Hand; but cannot promise to love you.

*Mer.* That you'll quickly learn, if you'll give your Mind to't—however, he shall venture it, Madam—'twill require a day or two to put myself into an Equipage fit for my Quality—Our Marriage shall be deferr'd till then; but theirs shall be dispatch'd immediately.

*Cun.* Had I not best tell her the whole Truth now?

*Lov.* No, 'twill spoil our Mirth—stay till the true Viscount comes—it cannot be properly done till then.

*Cun.* Now, Madam, I have a Request to you.

*L. Lay.* Conclude it granted, Sir.

*Cun.* *Jeffery* loves *Prudence*, and hopes you will not oppose it, Madam.

*L. Lay.* What say you to it, *Prudence*?

*Pru.* If he'll promise not to be jealous, Madam.

*Jeff.* If you'll engage never to give me cause, *Prudence*.

*Pru.* Well, I will marry you; and promise, if I find you troublesome, you shall not be jealous without a Cause.

*Clod. Damaris!*

*Dam.* Well.

*Clod.* Shall not we couple too—you understand me.

*Dam.* You'll carry me into the Country, and my Lady will not be willing to part with me.

*Lov.* What say you, Madam *Brittle*? if you'll commend *Damaris* to honest *Clodpole*, I'll settle 'em in a good Living, Madam.

*Wife.* If you are willing, Husband, I'll consent to it.

*Brit.* Aye, Aye, with all my Heart; and more, I'll give a Sum of Money to be rid of her.

*Dam.* Come *Clodpole*, 'tis a Bargain.

*Clod.* There's my Hand on't.

*Mer.* Methinks, Sir, you that are so busy to couple others want a Mate yourself—shall I provide one for you?

*Lov.* I will not give your Lordship so much Trouble—I'll say this in the Praise of little *London*, I never wanted a handsome Mistress here, but when I wanted Money.

*Cun.* Prithee leave thy wild-way of Love, and Marry, Tom.

*Lov.* I thank you for your Advice ; but I think I am better as I am—I know not what Difference there is in our Way of Love—I am sure there is little in the End.

*Wife.* Say you so—I find 'tis his Business to debauch young Women.

*Lov.* Romantick Love is almost out of fashion, *Jack* ; fine Speeches, and much Courtship, are not Baits for the Ladies now-a-days—'tis now, not who Loves most, but who Gives most, catches a pretty Woman.

*Wife.* Fortune has been very kind to me—I have had fair warning, and will tempt her fickle Ladyship no more. Well, Dear, if you'll forgive all my past Faults, henceforth I'll never give you any Cause to be Jealous of me more.

*Brit.* I must believe you—tho' you have jilted me so often, you may well excuse me if I doubt it.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Madam, the Parson's come.

*Mer.* That's well——bid my Servants strike up, we'll go merrily to this Business.

*A Dance.*

*Cun.* Take my Word, *Merryman*, the Viscount shall make you a good Present for acting his part so well.

*Mer.* I thank you, Sir—so, ev'ry one take his Mistress by the Hand ; we'll lead to the Parson—Our Marriage, Dear, must be a while deferr'd——Theirs shall be dispatch'd immediately.

*Lov.* Pray tell me one thing Gallants—since all your Weddings are to be together, why should the merry Execution be divided—I've heard of a famous Bed would hold you All.

*Mer.* You mean the Bed of Ware.

*What say you, will you to the Bed of Ware?*

*I'll stand and give the Word, and then start fair.*

F I N I S.



